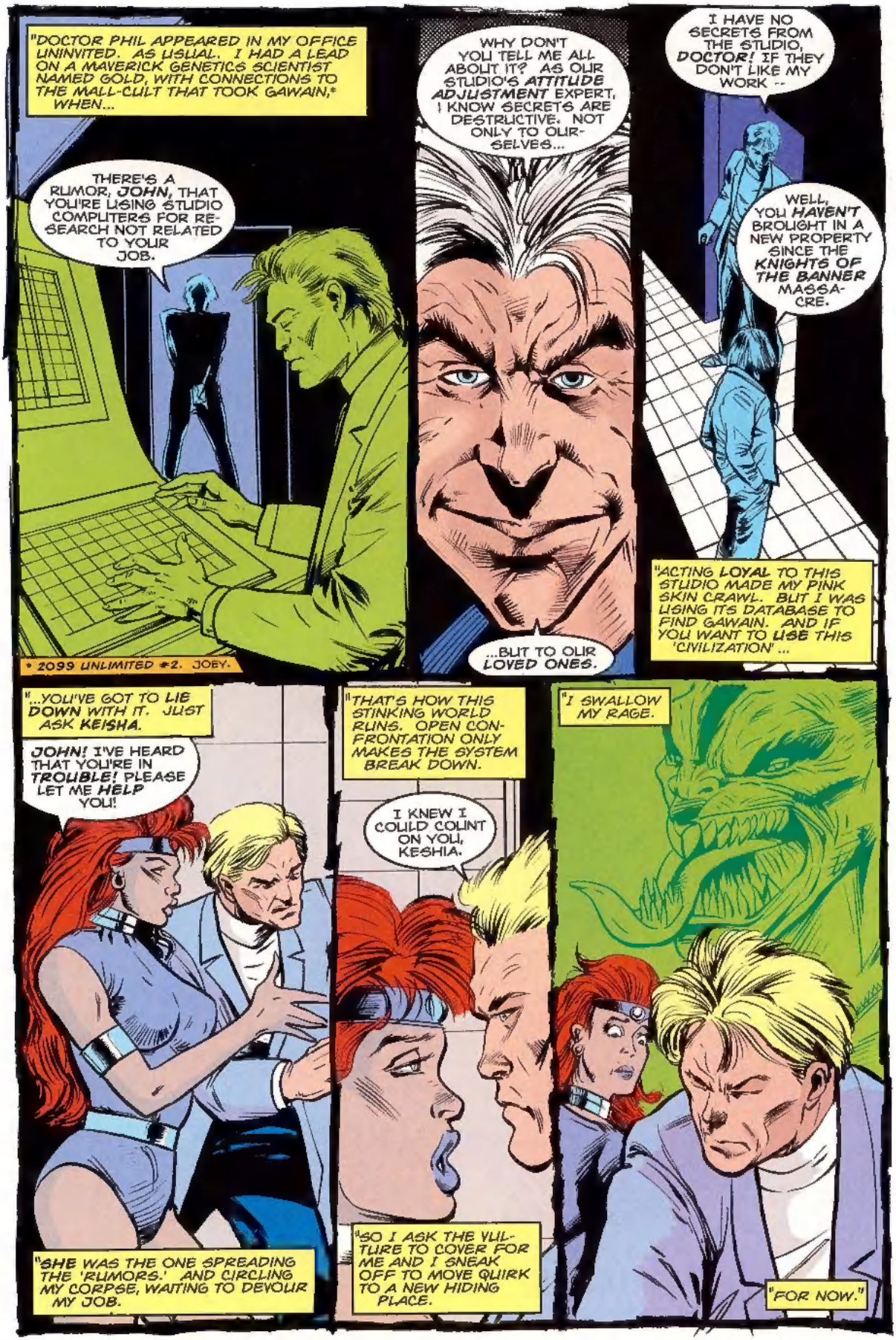
MARVEL COMICS
2099 UNLIMITED
$3.95 US
$5.35 CAN
5
JUL
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
FEATURING THE HULK 2099™
DIRECT EDITION
AND MORE ALL-OUT ACTION WITH
HAZZARD 2099™
AND THE LEGENDARY DUKE STRATOSPHERE!™

"IT WAS A THREAT. NO DOUBT ABOUT THAT. A THREAT TO MY 'LOVED ONES.'
"DOCTOR PHIL SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN THAT. IN HOLLYWOOD THERE ARE NO SUCH THINGS AS "LOVED ONES.
"BUT I DO HAVE QUIRK -- A GIRL WANTED FOR TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CROOKED MUSIC INDUSTRY, AND MY PARTNER IN A HUNT FOR A KIDNAPPED BOY NAMED GAWAIN --
"-- SO I'D BETTER GUN THIS AIR-CAR AND GET TO HER... BEFORE SOMEBODY ELSE DOES."
STAN LEE PRESENTS
HULK 2099
NEVER LET GO
GERARD JONES WRITER
PENCILER J.J. BIRCH
INKER FRED HARPER
STARKINGS w/O'NEIL LETTERERS
TOM SMITH COLORIST
EDITOR JOEY CAVALIERI
TOM DeFALCO LEADER

2099™ UNLIMITED Vol. 1, No. 5, July, 1994. Published by MARVEL COMICS. Terry Stewart, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. Michael Hobson, Group Vice President, Publishing. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, NY 10016. Published quarterly. Copyright © 1994 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. All rights reserved. Price $3.95 per copy in the U.S. and $5.35 in Canada. GST #R127032652. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. 2099 (including all prominent characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof) is a trademark of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, INC. Printed in Canada.


"DOCTOR PHIL APPEARED IN MY OFFICE UNINVITED. AS USUAL. I HAD A LEAD ON A MAVERICK GENETICS SCIENTIST NAMED GOLD, WITH CONNECTIONS TO THE MALL-CULT THAT TOOK GAWAIN,* WHEN...
THERE'S A RUMOR, JOHN, THAT YOU'RE USING STUDIO COMPUTERS FOR RESEARCH NOT RELATED TO YOUR JOB.
* 2099 UNLIMITED #2. JOEY.
WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME ALL ABOUT IT? AS OUR STUDIO'S ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT EXPERT, I KNOW SECRETS ARE DESTRUCTIVE. NOT ONLY TO OURSELVES...
...BUT TO OUR LOVED ONES.
I HAVE NO SECRETS FROM THE STUDIO, DOCTOR! IF THEY DON'T LIKE MY WORK --
WELL, YOU HAVEN'T BROUGHT IN A NEW PROPERTY SINCE THE KNIGHTS OF THE BANNER MASSACRE.
"ACTING LOYAL TO THIS STUDIO MADE MY PINK SKIN CRAWL. BUT I WAS USING ITS DATABASE TO FIND GAWAIN. AND IF YOU WANT TO USE THIS 'CIVILIZATION' ...
"...YOU'VE GOT TO LIE DOWN WITH IT. JUST ASK KEISHA.
JOHN! I'VE HEARD THAT YOU'RE IN TROUBLE! PLEASE LET ME HELP YOU!
"SHE WAS THE ONE SPREADING THE 'RUMORS.' AND CIRCLING MY CORPSE, WAITING TO DEVOUR MY JOB.
"THAT'S HOW THIS STINKING WORLD RUNS. OPEN CONFRONTATION ONLY MAKES THE SYSTEM BREAK DOWN.
I KNEW I COULD COUNT ON YOU, KESHIA.
"SO I ASK THE VULTURE TO COVER FOR ME AND I SNEAK OFF TO MOVE QUIRK TO A NEW HIDING PLACE.
"I SWALLOW MY RAGE.
"FOR NOW."

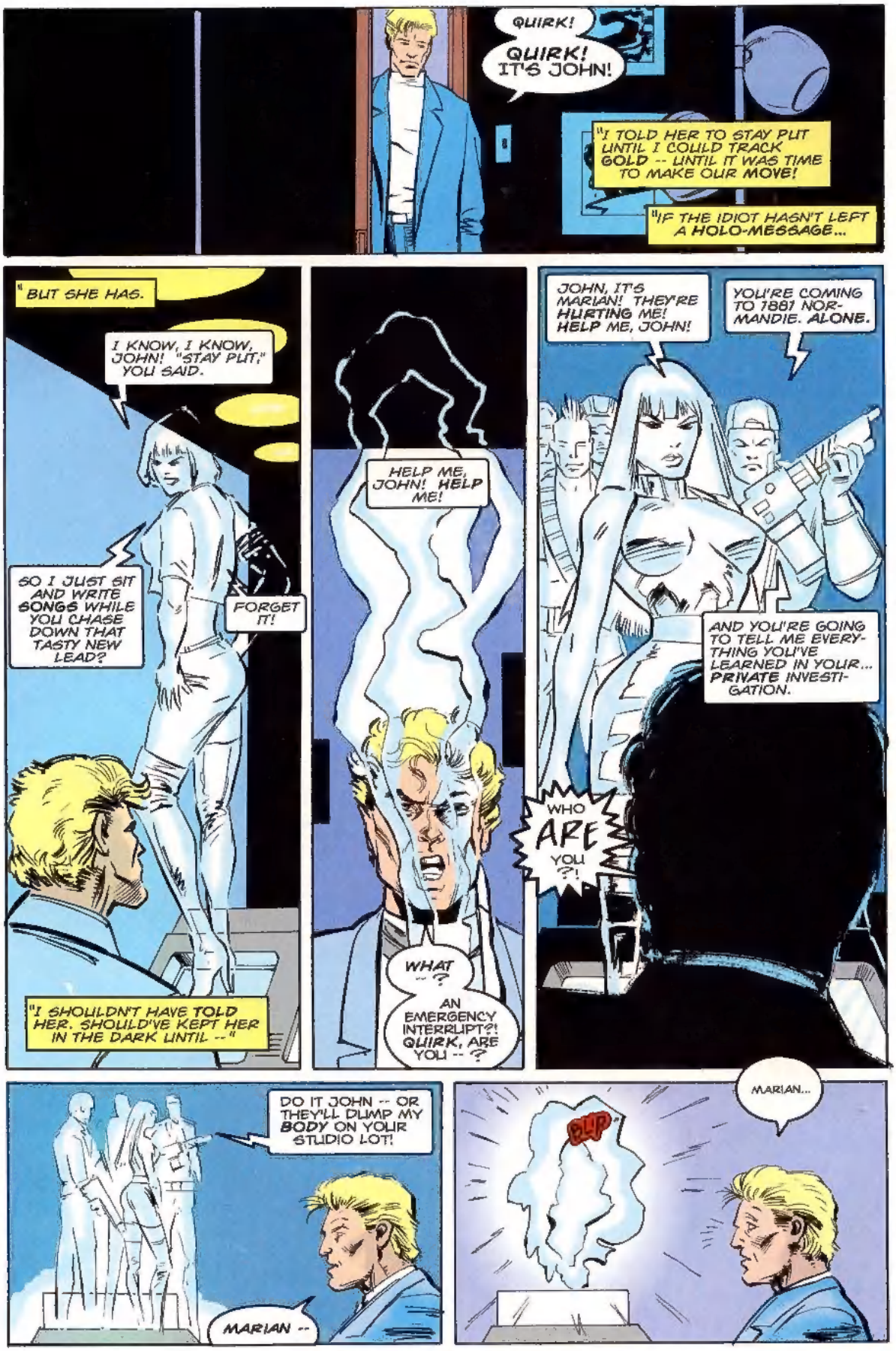
I OWN YOU. I CONTROL YOU. YOU MUST LOVE ME!
YES! YES! I DO LOVE YOU! DRAIN MY BLOOD! MAKE ME YOUR SLAVE!
EEP EEP EEP
SORRY. TIME'S UP.
BUT YOU CAN'T STOP NOW! WE DIDN'T GET TO THE FINAL SCENE! I'LL PAY YOU DOUBLE!
NEXT TIME. I'VE GOT AN APPOINT-MENT.
PLEASE, MARIAN! PLEASE!
CLIK
SORRY, HON. THE IMAGE CASTER'S OFF. NO MORE FANGS.
SLAM
"IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I COULD SAY NO.
"THAT'S WHAT LIFE DOES TO YOU, IF YOU AREN'T MEAN ENOUGH TO JUST TAKE WHAT YOU WANT. YOU SAY YES TO ANYTHING, JUST TO SURVIVE.
"MOST OF IT ISN'T AS NICE AS THIS VAM-PIRE-SHOW."
SINCE YOU'RE GOING OUT, CAN I BORROW YOUR IMAGE-CASTER?
SORRY. I NEED IT FOR MY APPOINTMENT. BUT IF THIS GOES LIKE IT SHOULD, I'LL BE ABLE TO BUY ANOTHER ONE AND GIVE IT TO YOU.

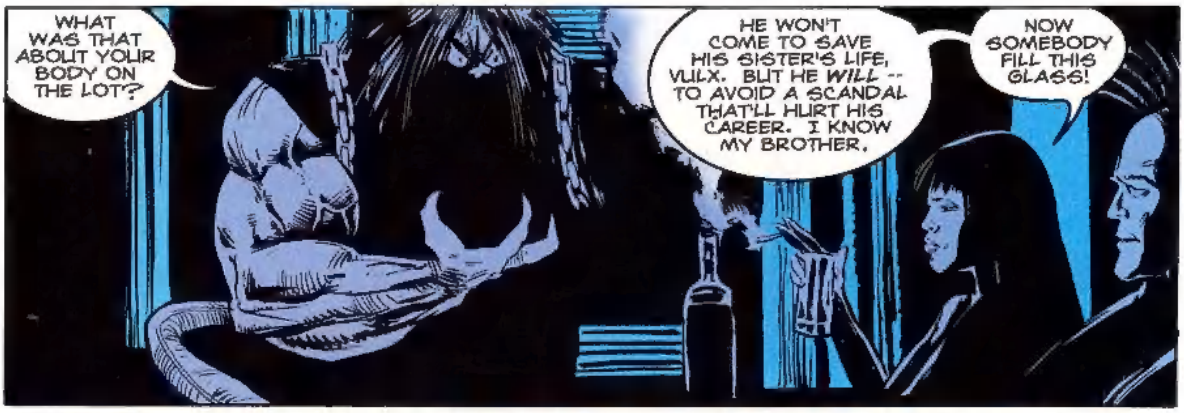
THIS HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH YOUR SUING YOUR BROTHER?
IT'S BETTER THAN SUING. IT'S A WAY TO GET OUT OF THIS "PSYCHODRAMA" RACKET -- WITHOUT GIVING JOHN A CHANCE TO DESTROY ME IN COURT.
IT'S SAD, HOW BROTHERS AND SISTERS AND KIDS AND PARENTS ARE ALWAYS SUING EACH OTHER NOW.
WHY? WHAT'S A FAMILY EXCEPT A LEGAL DEFINITION ANYMORE, ANYWAY?
ME AND MY FOLKS SUPPORTED JOHN WHILE HE WAS LEARNING TO BE VICIOUS AND GREEDY ENOUGH FOR THE VIRTUAL REALITY BIZ.
WHEN I WASN'T VICIOUS ENOUGH TO MAKE IT AS AN ACTRESS IN THAT WORLD, JOHN TURNED HIS BACK ON ME.

SO WHEN YOU GET THIS MONEY OFF HIM, WILL YOU GIVE SOME TO YOUR MOM AND DAD?
THAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO, ISN'T IT?

I JUST WISH I COULD BELIEVE IN DOING THE RIGHT THING ANYMORE.

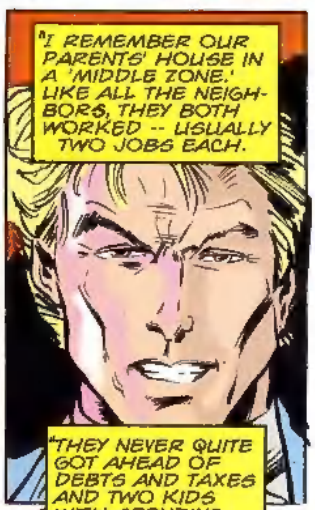
"LORD, THIS NEIGHBORHOOD.
"I REMEMBER JOHN AND I SWEARING, WHEN WE WERE YOUNG, THAT WE'D NEVER END UP IN A PLACE LIKE THIS.
XXX
X-RATED
"JOHN MADE IT. NOW I'VE GOT MY CHANCE. I'LL JUST HAVE TO BE A GOOD ACTRESS.
"AS GOOD AS JOHN USED TO TELL ME I WAS...BEFORE HE CLOSED HIS HEART TO EVERYTHING BUT SUCCESS."

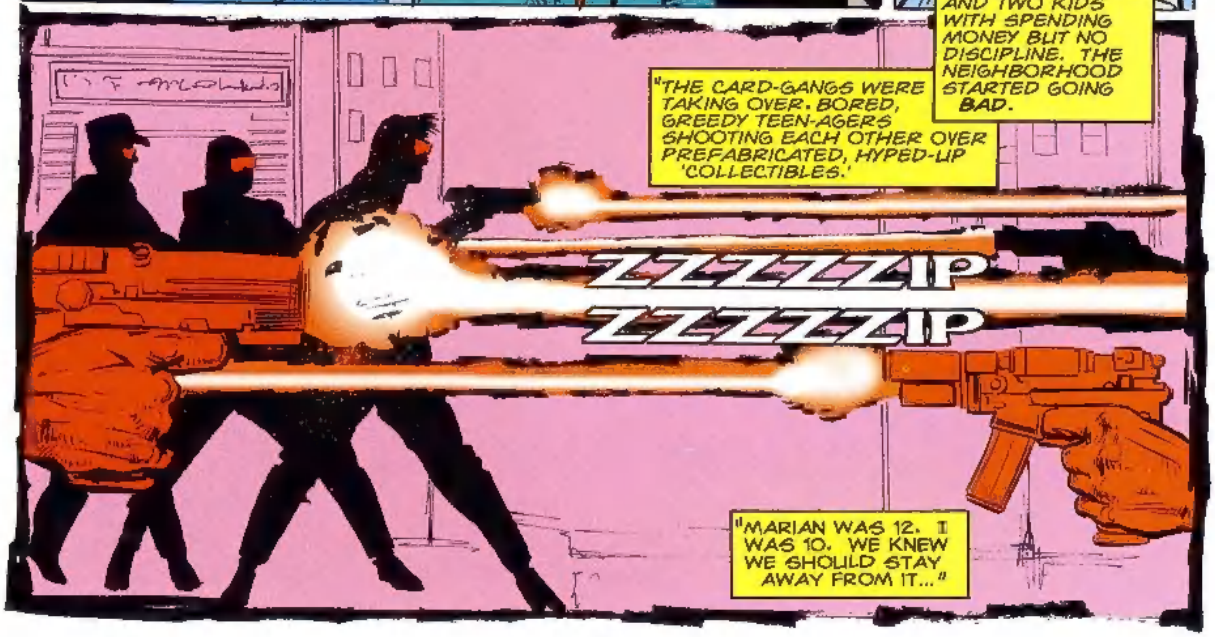

QUIRK!
QUIRK! IT'S JOHN!
"I TOLD HER TO STAY PUT UNTIL I COULD TRACK GOLD -- UNTIL IT WAS TIME TO MAKE OUR MOVE!
"IF THE IDIOT HASN'T LEFT A HOLO-MESSAGE...
"BUT SHE HAS.
I KNOW, I KNOW, JOHN! "STAY PUT," YOU SAID.
SO I JUST SIT AND WRITE SONGS WHILE YOU CHASE DOWN THAT TASTY NEW LEAD?
FORGET IT!
"I SHOULDN'T HAVE TOLD HER. SHOULD'VE KEPT HER IN THE DARK UNTIL --"
HELP ME, JOHN! HELP ME!
WHAT -- ?
AN EMERGENCY INTERRUPT?! QUIRK, ARE YOU -- ?
JOHN, IT'S MARIAN! THEY'RE HURTING ME! HELP ME, JOHN!
YOU'RE COMING TO 1881 NORMANDIE. ALONE.
AND YOU'RE GOING TO TELL ME EVERYTHING YOU'VE LEARNED IN YOUR... PRIVATE INVESTIGATION.
WHO ARE YOU ?!
DO IT JOHN -- OR THEY'LL DUMP MY BODY ON YOUR STUDIO LOT!
MARIAN --
MARIAN...
BLIP

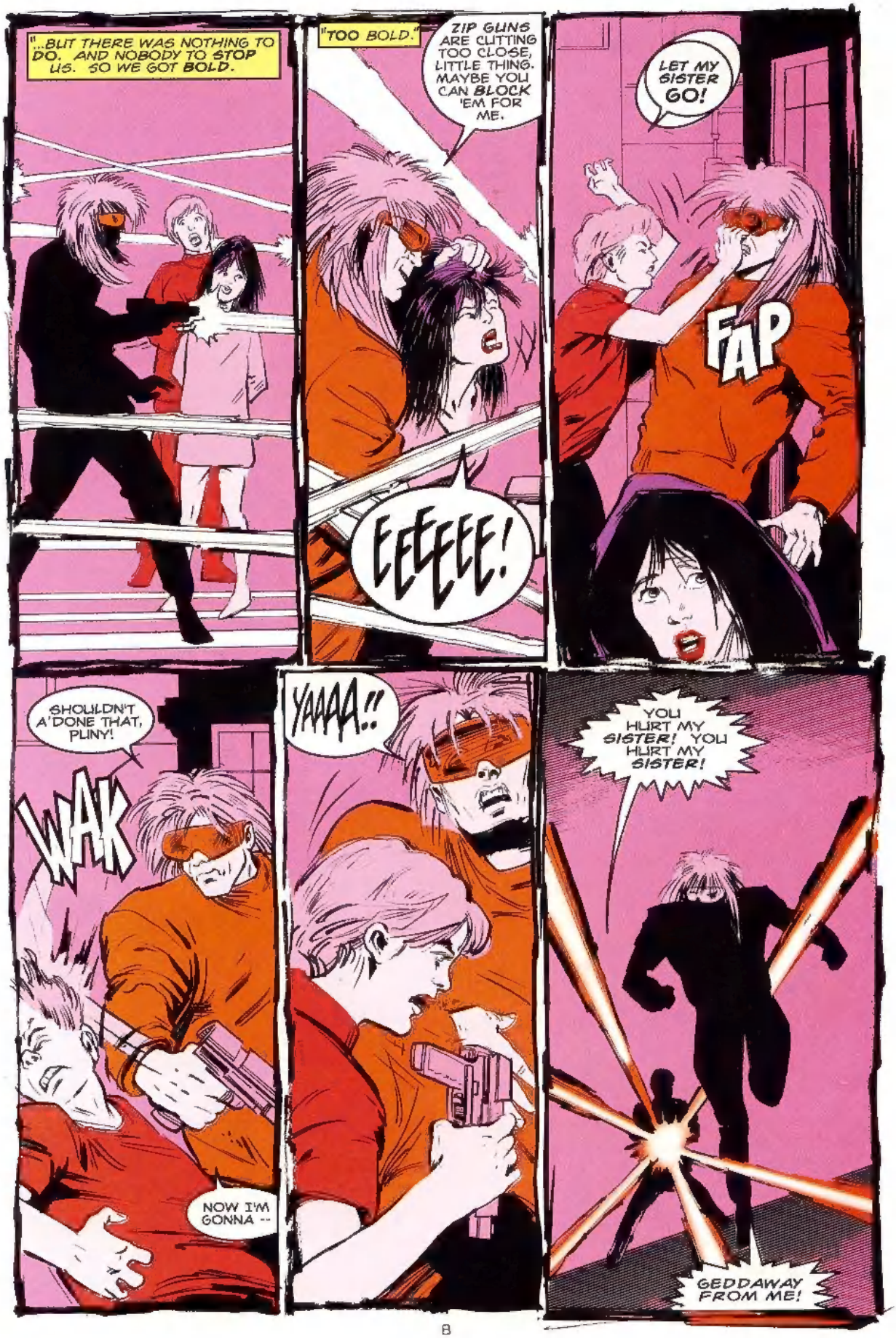

WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT YOUR BODY ON THE LOT?
HE WON'T COME TO SAVE HIS SISTER'S LIFE, VULX. BUT HE *WILL* -- TO AVOID A SCANDAL THAT'LL HURT HIS CAREER. I KNOW MY BROTHER.
NOW SOMEBODY FILL THIS GLASS!

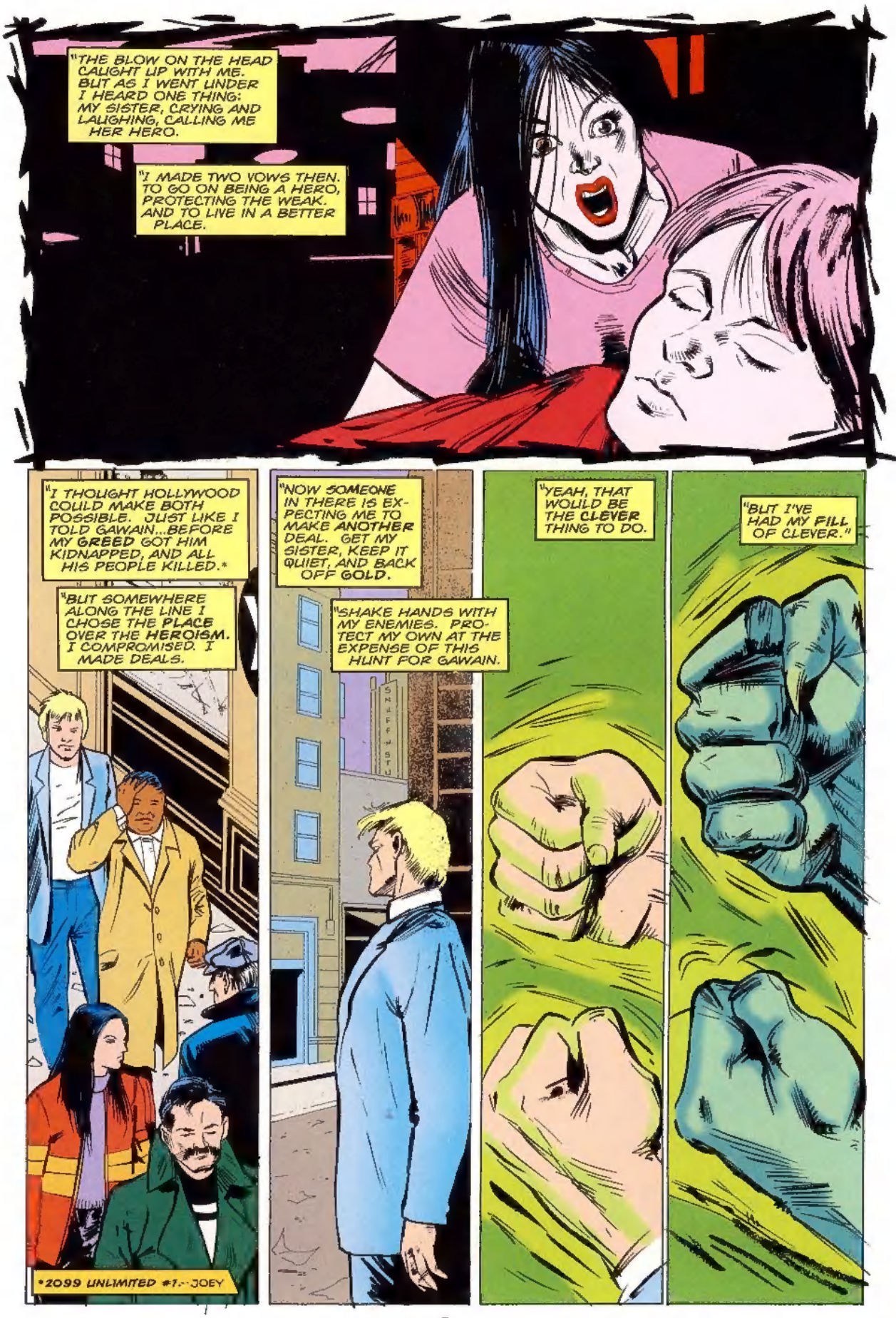
"AN 'UNSUPERVISED ZONE.'
"ABANDONED BY A BANKRUPT GOVERNMENT. TOO MANY POOR PEOPLE FOR SECURITY JOBBERS LIKE *SWEET DREAMS*. NO COPS, NO HIRED GUARDS.

"THE STRONG PREY ON THE WEAK, THE WEAK PAY OFF THE STRONG TO STOP THE PREYING.
"GANGS ARE THE POLICE. THE BRAVEST OF THE WEAK STEAL. THE REST JUST SURVIVE.
"I REMEMBER MARIAN AND I SWEARING WE'D NEVER LIVE IN A PLACE LIKE THIS.


"I REMEMBER OUR PARENTS' HOUSE IN A 'MIDDLE ZONE.' LIKE ALL THE NEIGHBORS, THEY BOTH WORKED -- USUALLY TWO JOBS EACH.
"THEY NEVER QUITE GOT AHEAD OF DEBTS AND TAXES AND TWO KIDS WITH SPENDING MONEY BUT NO DISCIPLINE. THE NEIGHBORHOOD STARTED GOING *BAD*.


"THE CARD-GANGS WERE TAKING OVER. BORED, GREEDY TEEN-AGERS SHOOTING EACH OTHER OVER PREFABRICATED, HYPED-UP 'COLLECTIBLES.'
ZZZZZIP
ZZZZZIP
"MARIAN WAS 12. I WAS 10. WE KNEW WE SHOULD STAY AWAY FROM IT..."


"...BUT THERE WAS NOTHING TO DO. AND NOBODY TO STOP US. SO WE GOT BOLD.
"TOO BOLD."
ZIP GUNS ARE CUTTING TOO CLOSE, LITTLE THING. MAYBE YOU CAN BLOCK 'EM FOR ME.
EEEEEE!
LET MY SISTER GO!
FAP
SHOULDN'T A'DONE THAT, PLINY!
WAK
NOW I'M GONNA --
YAAAA!!
YOU HURT MY SISTER! YOU HURT MY SISTER!
GEDDAWAY FROM ME!


"THE BLOW ON THE HEAD CAUGHT UP WITH ME. BUT AS I WENT UNDER I HEARD ONE THING: MY SISTER, CRYING AND LAUGHING, CALLING ME HER HERO.
"I MADE TWO VOWS THEN. TO GO ON BEING A HERO, PROTECTING THE WEAK. AND TO LIVE IN A BETTER PLACE.
"I THOUGHT HOLLYWOOD COULD MAKE BOTH POSSIBLE. JUST LIKE I TOLD GAWAIN...BEFORE MY GREED GOT HIM KIDNAPPED, AND ALL HIS PEOPLE KILLED.*
"BUT SOMEWHERE ALONG THE LINE I CHOSE THE PLACE OVER THE HEROISM. I COMPROMISED. I MADE DEALS.
*2099 UNLIMITED #1.--JOEY
"NOW SOMEONE IN THERE IS EXPECTING ME TO MAKE ANOTHER DEAL. GET MY SISTER, KEEP IT QUIET, AND BACK OFF GOLD.
"SHAKE HANDS WITH MY ENEMIES. PROTECT MY OWN AT THE EXPENSE OF THIS HUNT FOR GAWAIN.
"YEAH, THAT WOULD BE THE CLEVER THING TO DO.
"BUT I'VE HAD MY FILL OF CLEVER."

BAKOOM
YOU BOYS WANT TO MAKE A DEAL?
THEN LET'S DO IT HULK STYLE!
TELL ME EVERYTHING I WANT TO KNOW --AND I WON'T SQUEEZE YOUR LITTLE PINK GUTS OUT!
AND THE WOMAN IS GOING WITH --
WHAT?!
FUNNY KIDNAPPERS WHO SERVE DRINKS! WHAT IS THIS?

A GAME, MY FRIEND. YOU LOSE.
VOLX WINS!
AAARRGH!

I HEARD THERE WAS A GREAT GREE■ MONSTER HAUNTING THE CITY. I WANTED TO MEET YOU. I DIDN'T THINK I'D BE SO LUCKY.
BLAST... YOU! DON'T KNOW HOW YOU...STICK LIKE THIS...
BECAUSE I'VE BEEN EVOLVED BY MY MASTER FOR JUST THAT! TRY TO TEAR ME OFF --
-- AND YOU'LL ONLY RIP OUT CHUNKS OF YOURSELF.
WHAT IS THAT THING?!
HE'S NOT ONE OF THE MASTER'S CREATIONS!
SOMEBODY ELSE IS MAKING MONSTERS!
HE CAME TO SAVE HER! SHE MUST KNOW!
I DON'T KNOW ANY-THING! YOU TOLD ME IT WOULDN'T GET VIOLENT!
GET ME OUT OF THIS!

YOU THINK YOU'RE STRONG?
NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO UNCOVER MY MASTER'S SECRETS! NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO STOP MY MASTER'S MISSION!
WOULD YOU... PLEASE...
SHUT UP!!
UNNGH!
MY... SKULL!
AAHHH
TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTION -- YEAH!
RRRRRRIP!

I THINK I'M STRONG.
THOOM
KRAAAK
THE BUILDING'S GOING!
BAIL OUT!
THROUGH THE HOLE!
UH-UH. I'VE GOT QUESTIONS -- AND I BET I CAN SQUEEZE ANSWERS OUT OF YOU FASTER THAN YOUR FRIEND WITH THE TENTACLES!

YEAH. AND WAIT'LL YOU SEE WHO I CAN SQUEEZE.
PLEASE, NO.
MARIAN.
"I TELL MYSELF SHE CAN'T DO ANYTHING FOR ME. WE'RE NOTHING TO EACH OTHER ANYMORE. THOSE THUGS ARE WORTH MORE THAN --
EEEEE!!
"BUT I'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE."
LET MY SISTER GO!
JOHN...?
SHRAMM

LET--
MY--
SISTER--
GYAARKHHH
SHUK
SHUK
JOHN!
PULL THEM...OUT! OR I'LL BREAK YOU...IN HALF!
ARRGH
NOT BEFORE... MY TENTACLES SUCK THE BRAINS...OUT OF YOUR SKULL!

GET HIM! THE MASTER'LL KILL US IF WE LET HIS FAVORITE MONSTER GET BROKEN!
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
IT'S NO GOOD!
VLILX! YOU GOTTA BEAT HIM!
WAIT. MY IMAGE-CASTER!
IT MIGHT CONFUSE HIM. IT MIGHT TIP THE BATTLE!
THEN USE IT. THE MASTER'LL PAY YOU A FORTUNE!
USE IT!
USE IT!
YES...

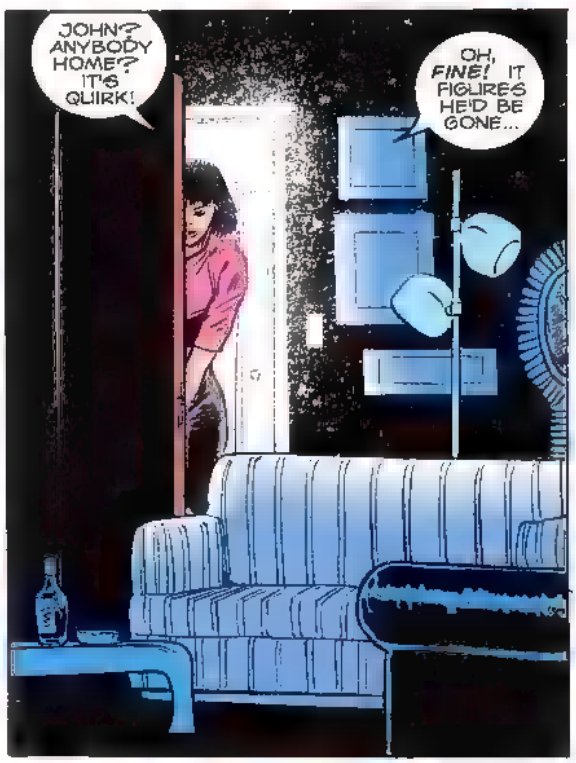
WHAT?
HE'S...
...DEAD
POW
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SEEING, PAL... BUT IT AIN'T ME!

CHASHH
KRUMP
OH --!
RUN!
"THE ANSWERS I WANT. ESCAPING WITH THEM.
"MY COURSE IS CLEAR.
"VERY CLEAR."
KRDOF
JOHN... IS IT REALLY YOU?

I DON'T... I DON'T UNDER-STAND!
I CAN'T BELIEVE...I MEAN...I THOUGHT YOU'D JUST COME AND TALK... AND...
I'VE BEEN THROUGH SOME CHANGES LATELY.
I GUESS I DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO ASK QUESTIONS. I... I SET YOU UP, JOHN. THEY WANTED INFOR-MATION FROM YOU AND SAID THEY'D PAY ME IF I GOT YOU TO...
I GET IT.
IT'S MONEY YOU WANT.
TAKE IT.
YOUR CREDIT CARD? YOU MEAN IT? YOU'LL LET ME...
MONEY.
IT'S ALL I'VE GONE AFTER FOR A LONG TIME.
JOHN EIGENHAM
IT SEEMED LIKE ALL YOU WERE AFTER, TOO. ALL ANYBODY'S AFTER.
MAYBE THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE TO GO AFTER. MAYBE YOU'VE FOUND IT.
TELL ME ABOUT THE CHANGES YOU'VE GONE THROUGH, LITTLE BROTHER. AND NOT JUST THE...OBVIOUS ONES.
I WILL... ...SIS.

BUT FIRST THERE'S MY *DUTY*. PROTECTING THE WEAK, JUST LIKE I PROMISED YOU...A LONG TIME AGO.
SOMEBODY OUT THERE IS DOING SOMETHING *UGLY* WITH GENETICS. NOW HE KNOWS THAT JOHN EISENHART AND THE *HULK* ARE BOTH AFTER HIM.
I HAVE TO FIND A KIDNAPPED YOUNG MAN AND STOP A PLAN TO ATTACK THE WORLD WITH MORE CREATURES LIKE ME.

AND I MAY HAVE JUST LOST MY LAST CHANCE TO UNCOVER THE INFORMATION I NEED.

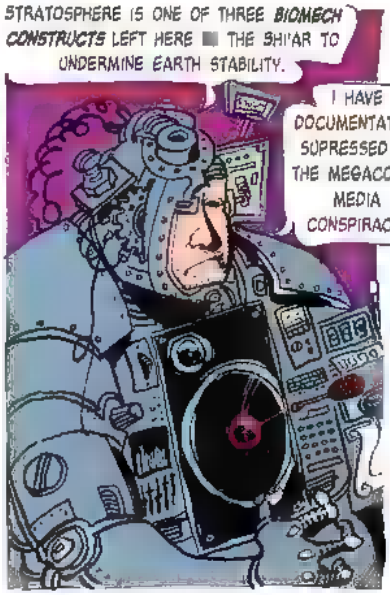

JOHN? ANYBODY HOME? IT'S QUIRK!
OH, *FINE!* IT FIGURES HE'D BE GONE...

...RIGHT WHEN I FINALLY COME UP WITH THE INFO HE'S BEEN LOOKING FOR!
NEXT: GARGOYLE at LAST! and the HULK goes HEAD TO HEAD with the MASTER of MONSTERS!

DUKE STRATOSPHERE?
USED TO BE A REGULAR-- THAT IS--BEFORE HE SAVED CYBERSPACE FROM THE DOMINO.
NOW THIS JOINT'S TOO DOWNBEAT FOR A UPTEMPO CELEB LIKE HIM.

WHAT CAN I SAY, MONKEY BOY? OL' STRAT DEFINED THE GLIDE.
I SAW HIM ONCE AT THE SILICON FETISH CROSSROADS ON THE NET. HE'S A GOD!
I MUST KILL THE DUKE SO I CAN BECOME THE DUKE.

THAT CRIMINAL? HE AND HIS KIND ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COLLAPSE OF ORDER IN THIS COUNTRY.
AND WHY DO YOU WANT TO KNOW, CITIZEN? LET ME SEE SOME IDENTIFICATION.


STRATOSPHERE IS ONE OF THREE BIOMECH CONSTRUCTS LEFT HERE BY THE SHI'AR TO UNDERMINE EARTH STABILITY.
I HAVE DOCUMENTATION SUPRESSED BY THE MEGACORP-MEDIA CONSPIRACY.

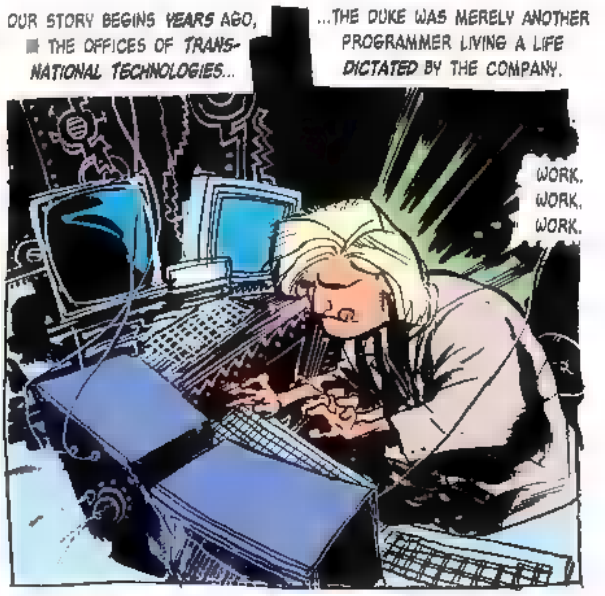
*TRANSLATED FROM LATVERIAN.

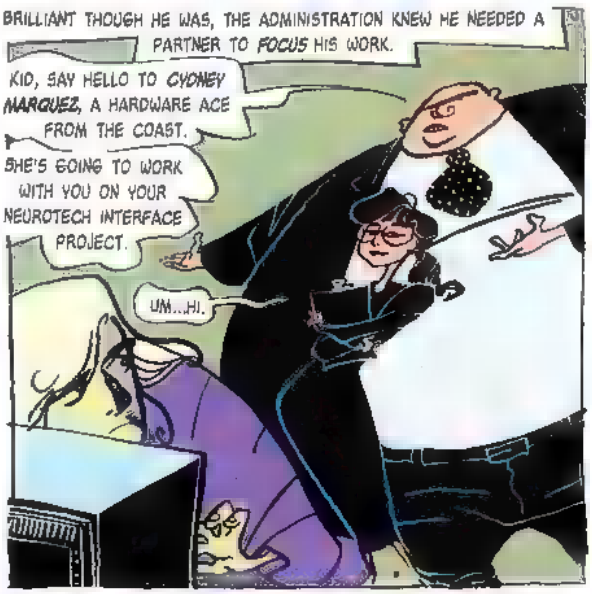
MR. STRATOSPHERE REFUSED MY COMPANY'S GENEROUS OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT IN OUR INTELLIGENCE GATHERING DIVISION.
HE MUST BE CRAZY. WE HAVE AN EXCELLENT DENTAL PLAN.

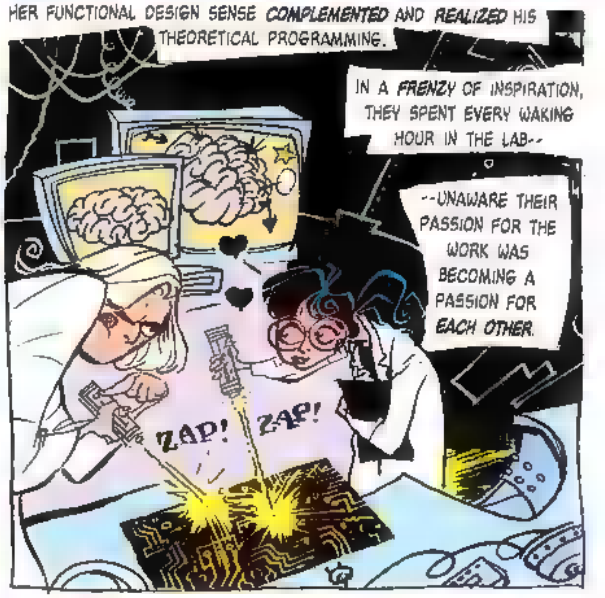
AW, YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME WITH THOSE KNOW-NOTHINGS.
IF YOU WANT THE REAL DIRT, YOU GOTTA TALK TO THE ONLY CAT WHO CAN TELL YOU...

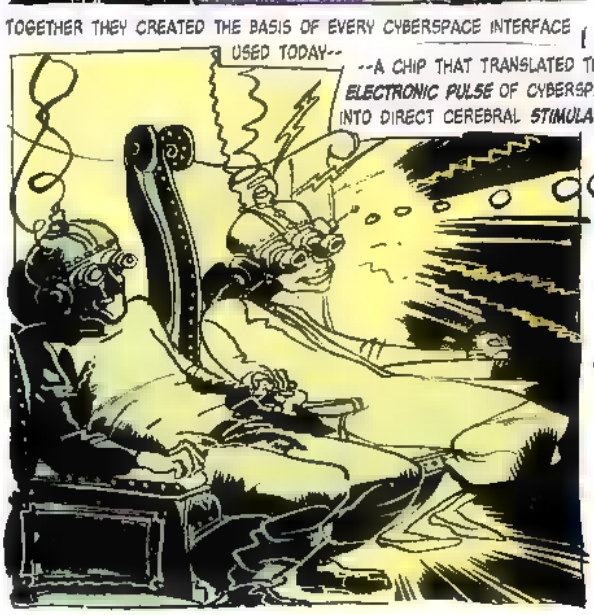
EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT
DUKE STRATOSPHERE
BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK!
AS EXPLAINED BY THAT SULTAN OF SCOO[illegible]AT
LORD OF LOW DOWN, THE GURU OF GOSSIP
MR. BONGO!
THAT'S ME!
BY
JOHN MOORE
AND
KYLE BAKER
A STAN LEE PRESENTATION

YES, I, MR. BONGO, WILL NOW DISPEL THE MYTHS AND MISINFORMATION SURROUNDING THE DUKE...
...AND REVEAL TO YOU THE TRUE CIRCUMSTANCE OF HIS ASTONISHING ORIGIN!

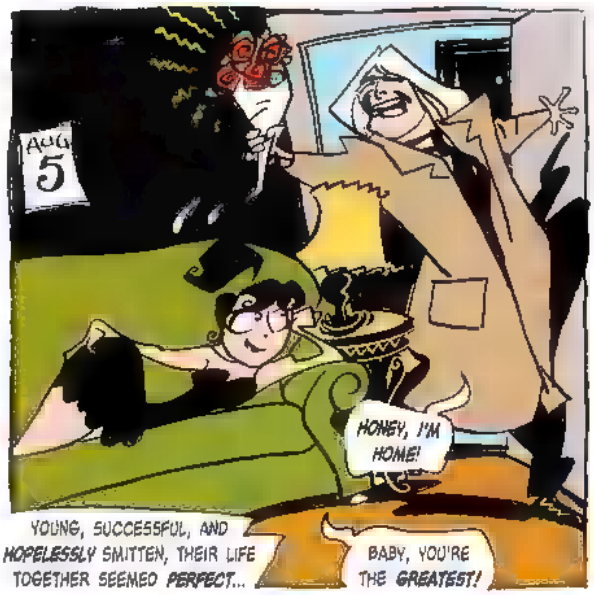

OUR STORY BEGINS YEARS AGO, IN THE OFFICES OF TRANS-NATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES...
...THE DUKE WAS MERELY ANOTHER PROGRAMMER LIVING A LIFE DICTATED BY THE COMPANY.
WORK. WORK. WORK.


BRILLIANT THOUGH HE WAS, THE ADMINISTRATION KNEW HE NEEDED A PARTNER TO FOCUS HIS WORK.
KID, SAY HELLO TO CYDNEY MARQUEZ, A HARDWARE ACE FROM THE COAST.
SHE'S GOING TO WORK WITH YOU ON YOUR NEUROTECH INTERFACE PROJECT.
UM...HI.


HER FUNCTIONAL DESIGN SENSE COMPLEMENTED AND REALIZED HIS THEORETICAL PROGRAMMING.
IN A FRENZY OF INSPIRATION, THEY SPENT EVERY WAKING HOUR IN THE LAB--
--UNAWARE THEIR PASSION FOR THE WORK WAS BECOMING A PASSION FOR EACH OTHER.
ZAP!
ZAP!


TOGETHER THEY CREATED THE BASIS OF EVERY CYBERSPACE INTERFACE USED TODAY--
--A CHIP THAT TRANSLATED THE ELECTRONIC PULSE OF CYBERSPACE INTO DIRECT CEREBRAL STIMULATION.

PLAYING IN A CYBERSPACE MADE MORE SENSUOUSLY RESOLVED THANKS TO THEIR BREAKTHROUGH TECH--
--THEY FELL IN LOVE.



YOUNG, SUCCESSFUL, AND *HOPELESSLY* SMITTEN, THEIR LIFE TOGETHER SEEMED *PERFECT*...

...UNTIL THE DAY CYD *VANISHED* INTO THIN AIR..

THE DUKE WAS *DEVASTATED*.

SORRY, KID, IT LOOKS LIKE CYD WAS GRABBED BY A COMPETITOR IN A [redacted] *HUNTING* RAID.

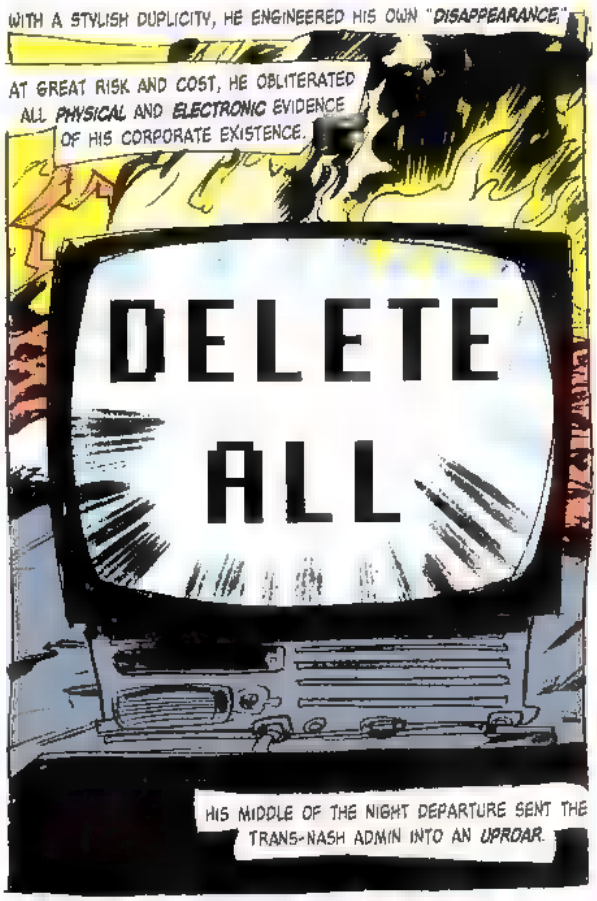
BUT THE LAB OFFERED *NO* SOLACE, ONLY THE CONSTANT REMINDER OF CYD'S ABSENCE.

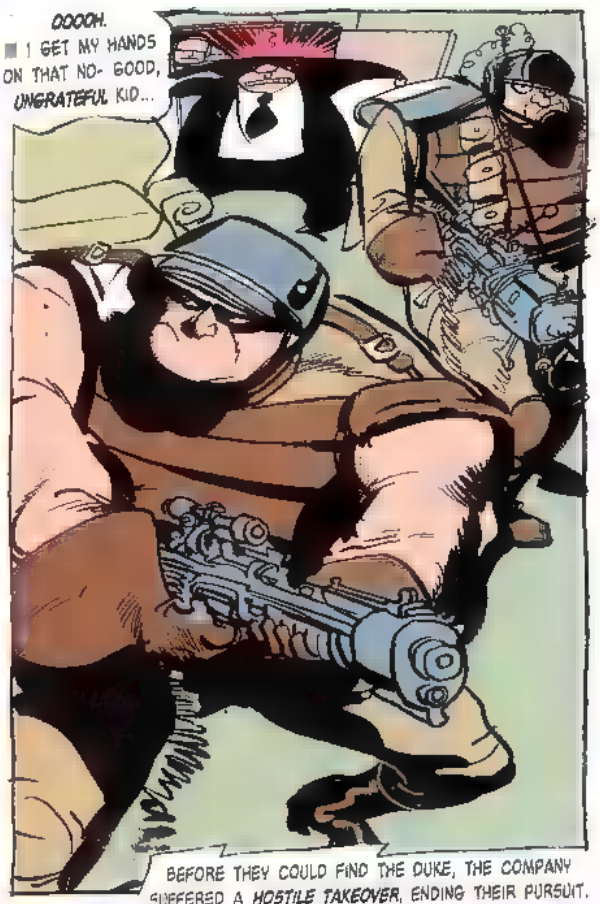
DOGGEDLY SEARCHING THE NET, HE LOOKED FOR *ANY* CLUE TO HER WHEREABOUTS, BUT FOUND *NOTHING*.

CYD!

HE PLUNGED INTO A DEEP *DEPRESSION*, LOSING INTEREST IN WORK AND IN PERSONAL HYGIENE.

BELIEVING THE TRANS-NASH ADMIN DIDN'T WANT HIM TO FIND CYD--
--HE DECIDED TO *LEAVE* THE COMPANY, KNOWING HE HAD ONLY *ONE* MEANS OF BREAKING HIS *LIFETIME* CONTRACT--
--HIS OWN *DEATH*.


WITH A STYLISH DUPLICITY, HE ENGINEERED HIS OWN "DISAPPEARANCE."
AT GREAT RISK AND COST, HE OBLITERATED ALL PHYSICAL AND ELECTRONIC EVIDENCE OF HIS CORPORATE EXISTENCE.
DELETE ALL
HIS MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT DEPARTURE SENT THE TRANS-NASH ADMIN INTO AN UPROAR.

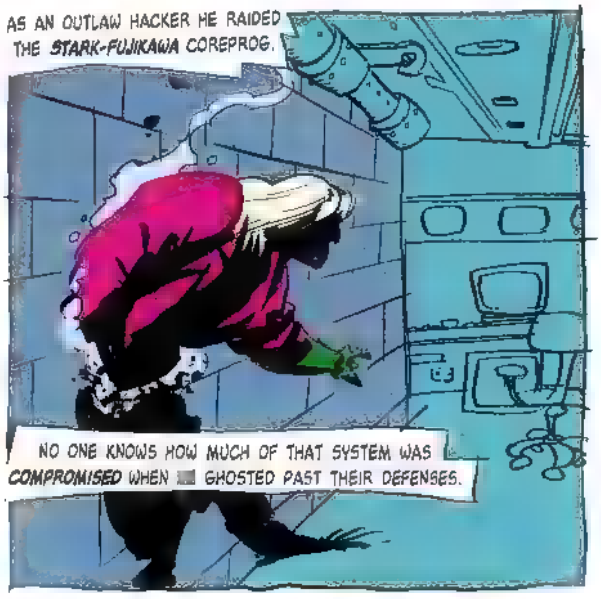

OOOOH.
I GET MY HANDS ON THAT NO- GOOD, UNGRATEFUL KID...
BEFORE THEY COULD FIND THE DUKE, THE COMPANY SUFFERED A HOSTILE TAKEOVER, ENDING THEIR PURSUIT.

MEANWHILE, LIVING IN THE SHADOWS OF CORPORATE CULTURE, THE DUKE SEARCHED IN VAIN FOR HIS LOST LOVE.
AFTER YEARS OF CRISSCROSSING THE GLOBE, HE RELUCTANTLY ABANDONED HIS QUEST--
--SEQUESTERING HIMSELF IN A NOWHERESVILLE IN THE SOUTHWEST.

RESIGNED TO A LIFE ALONE, HE THREW HIMSELF BACK INTO HIS NEUROTECH RESEARCH --
--EVENTUALLY GOING BEYOND THE WORK HE AND CYD HAD BEGUN AT TRANS-NASH.

NOW THERE ARE CERTAIN PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS ALL GLIDERS FACE--
--NO MATTER HOW BIG AND BAD THEIR CYBERSPACE PROGRAM ARCHETYPES MAY BE.
BY PLUGGING INTO THE NET, A GLIDER SWITCHES OFF SENSORY INPUT FROM THE REAL WORLD--
AND GOES INTO WHAT'S CALLED A CYBER TRANCE.
IN HIS SELF IMPOSED EXILE, THE DUKE CREATED A NEUROTECH IMPLANT THAT ALLOWS HIM TO OPERATE BICAMERALLY.
INSTEAD OF LYING DEAD TO THE WORLD IN A C-TRANCE, HE MOVES FREELY IN THE MATERIAL WORLD--
--WHILE STILL GLIDING THROUGH THE CYBERSPACE ETHER.
REAL WORLD
HE'S LIKE A SPLIT PERSONALITY WORKING TWO JOBS AT THE SAME TIME.
HE CAN FUNCTION IN CYBERSPACE AND THE REAL WORLD SIMULTANEOUSLY.
AFTER DISCARDING HIS OLD LIFE AFTER CYD'S DISAPPEARANCE, HE FOUND A NEW ONE IN THE NET AS...
...DUKE STRATOSPHERE!

WORD OF THE DUKE'S EXPLOITS QUICKLY SPREAD ACROSS EVERY BOARD ON THE NET.
I'M SURE YOU'VE ACCESSED SOME OF THE STORIES...

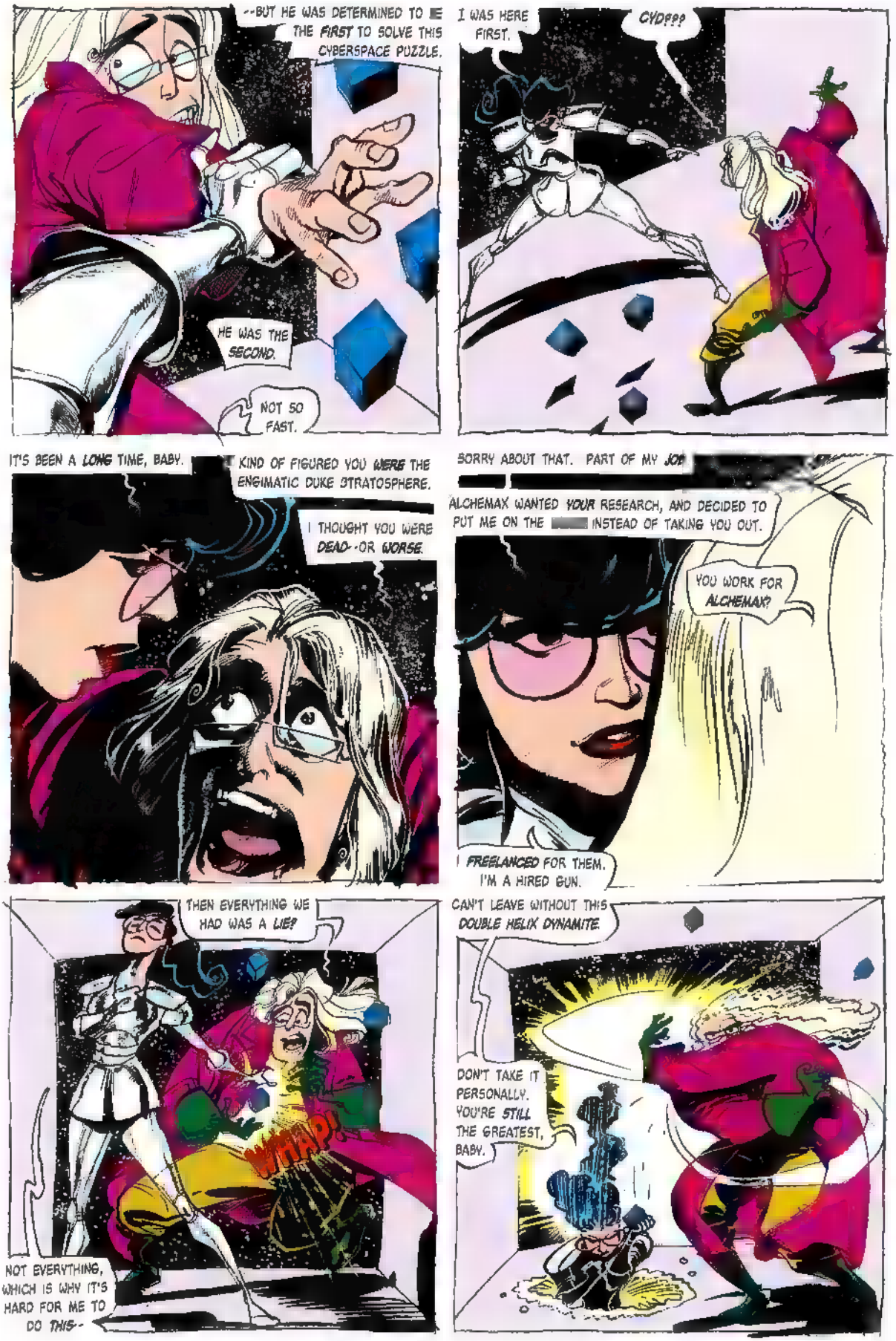

AS AN OUTLAW HACKER HE RAIDED THE STARK-FUJIKAWA COREPROG.
NO ONE KNOWS HOW MUCH OF THAT SYSTEM WAS COMPROMISED WHEN [redacted] GHOSTED PAST THEIR DEFENSES.

ABLE TO CIRCUMVENT THE MANY [redacted] AND FENCES IN THE ELECTRONIC LANDSCAPE--
--HE EXPLORED AND CHARTED MUCH OF THE DANGEROUSLY UNSTABLE WASTELANDS.

INEVITABLY HE CROSSED PATHS WITH OTHER [redacted] GLIDERS--
--SOME OF WHOM, LIKE THE VIRAL FEVER, REGARDED THE DUKE AS A THREAT.

WHEN THE FABRIC OF CYBERSPACE WAS THREATENED BY THE DOMINO CRASH--
--HE JOINED FORCES WITH SHIVA BLUE, DOT 33, BROKEN HAIKU, AND FIRELIGHT TO PREVENT THE TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF THE NET.

HIS ONLY KNOWN DEFEAT CAME WHEN HE CRACKED THE CHROMOSOME VAULT--
--THE GORDIAN KNOT OF CYBERSPACE, SUPPOSEDLY IMPENETRABLE--
--AND RUMORED TO CONTAIN THE DNA SEQUENCES OF FOUR OF THE LAST CENTURY'S MOST POWERFUL BEINGS.
IT TOOK A FULL YEAR TO DECIPHER AND BREAK THE MOBIUS LOOP SECURITY CODES--


--BUT HE WAS DETERMINED TO BE THE FIRST TO SOLVE THIS CYBERSPACE PUZZLE.
HE WAS THE SECOND.
NOT SO FAST.
I WAS HERE FIRST.
CYD???
IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME, BABY.
I KIND OF FIGURED YOU WERE THE ENIGMATIC DUKE STRATOSPHERE.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD--OR WORSE.
SORRY ABOUT THAT. PART OF MY JOB
ALCHEMAX WANTED YOUR RESEARCH, AND DECIDED TO PUT ME ON THE [redacted] INSTEAD OF TAKING YOU OUT.
YOU WORK FOR ALCHEMAX?
I FREELANCED FOR THEM. I'M A HIRED GUN.
THEN EVERYTHING WE HAD WAS A LIE?
WHAP!
NOT EVERYTHING, WHICH IS WHY IT'S HARD FOR ME TO DO THIS--
CAN'T LEAVE WITHOUT THIS DOUBLE HELIX DYNAMITE.
DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY. YOU'RE STILL THE GREATEST, BABY.

CVD'S RETURN WAS THE ONE THING THAT COULD THROW THE OTHERWISE IMPERTURBABLE DUKE OFF TRACK.
HE GAVE CHASE, ANGRY, HUMILIATED, AND-- HE HATED HIMSELF FOR THIS--STILL IN LOVE.

BUT SHE ELUDED HIM ONCE AGAIN.
SLAM!

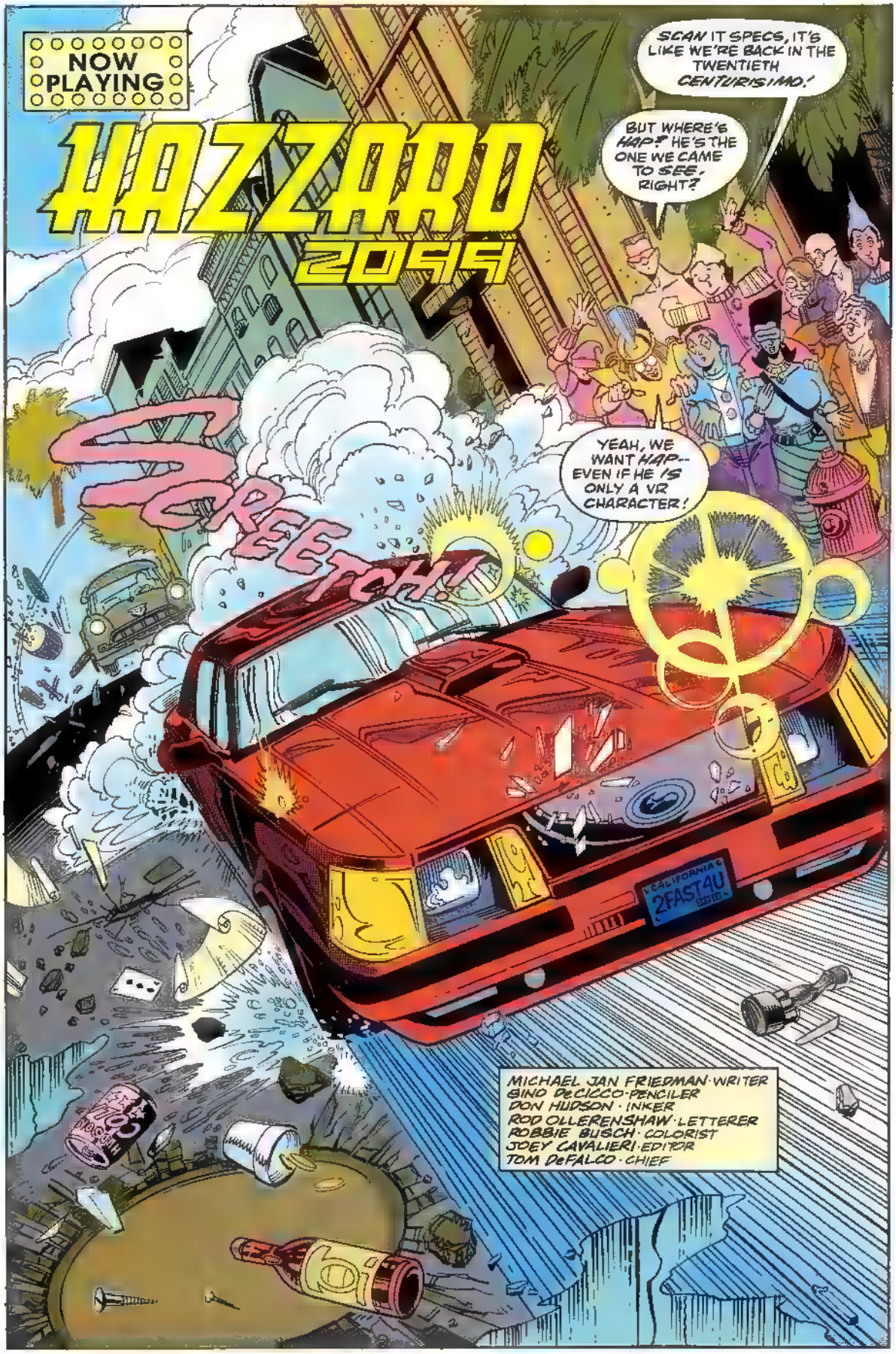
CVD.

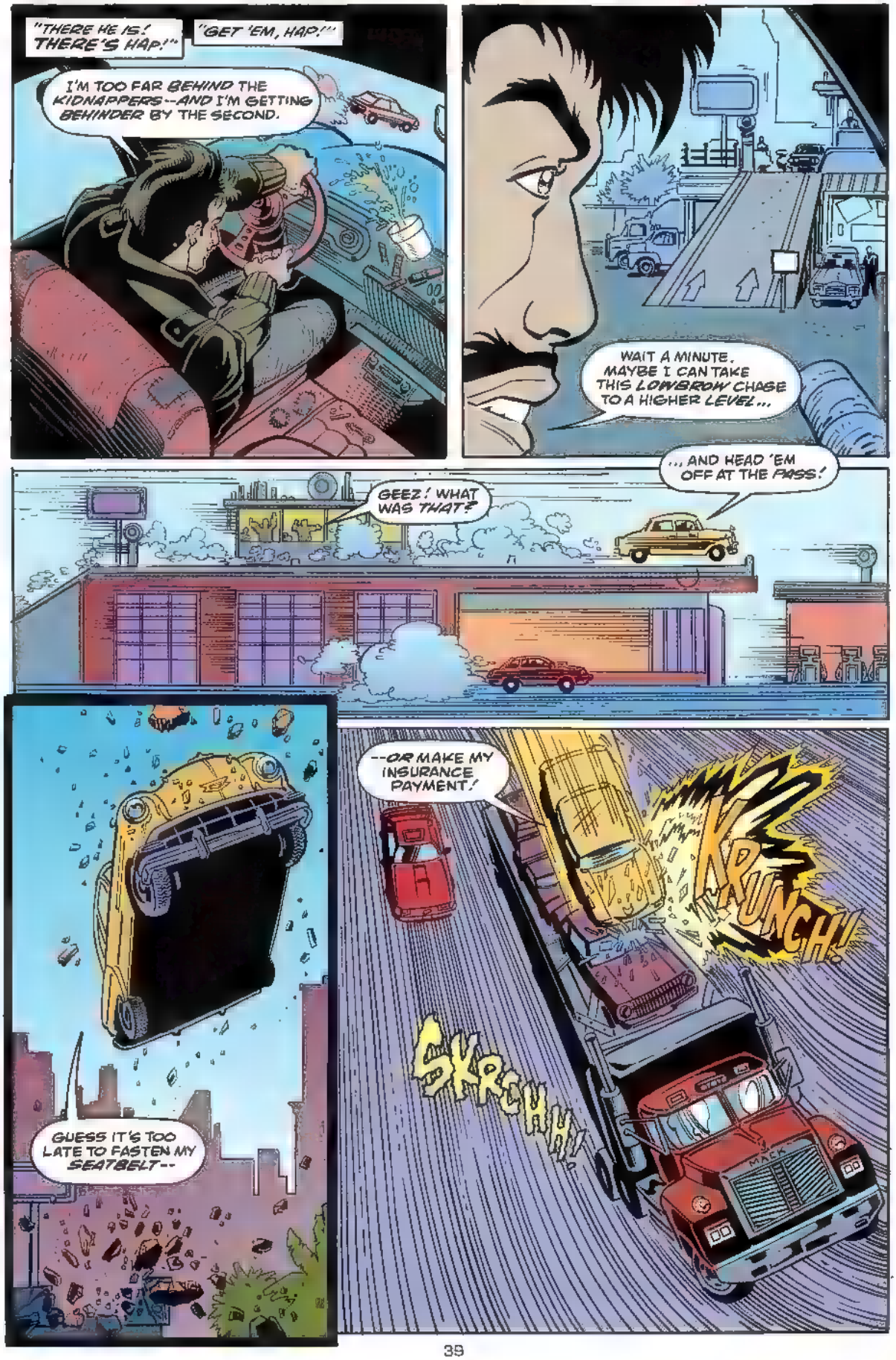
--THE FLASHY, HEROIC ARCHETYPE CONCEALS A HEARTBROKEN MAN, COMPENSATING FOR THE LOSS OF...

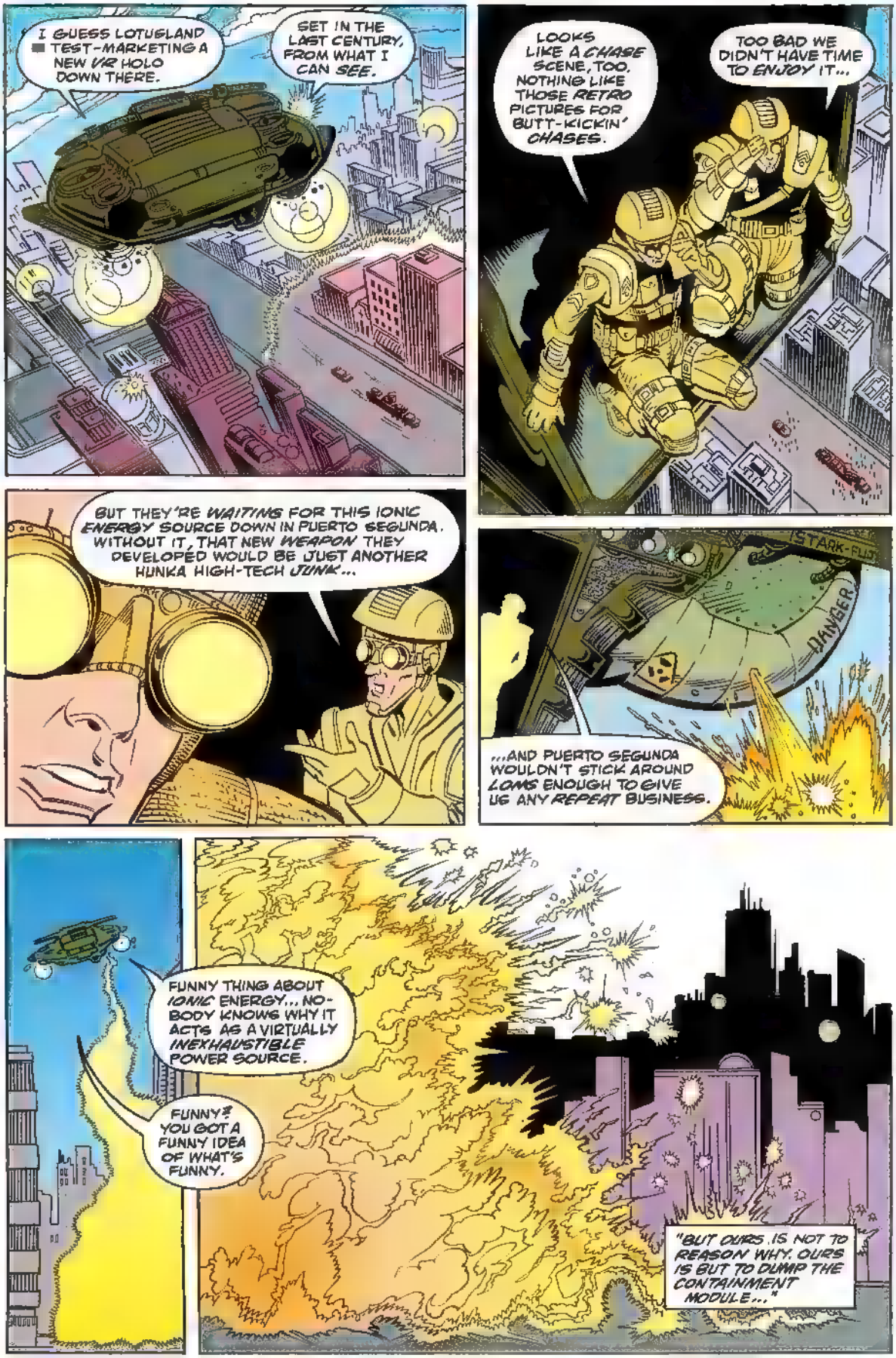
AHEM.
DUKE?
I SWEAR, I WASN'T TALKING ABOUT YOU. I SWEAR.

THE TRUTH IS THAT, IN SPITE OF HIS REPUTATION AS THE NET'S MOST DARING GLIDER--
BONGO, YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU GO SHOOTING YOUR MOUTH OFF IN PUBLIC.
I'M SORRY. I'LL NEVER DO IT AGAIN. PUH-LEEZ DON'T...

PROGRAM OFF.
AW NUTS!
POP!
HEY, DARLIN', GOT A PROBLEM?
YOU KNOW HOW SOMETIMES YOU WRITE A PROGRAM AND IT TAKES ON A LIFE OF ITS OWN?
WHAT WAS HE SAYING THIS TIME, BABY?
WHO KNOWS? HE NEVER GETS IT RIGHT.
COME TO THINK OF IT, YOU NEVER DID TELL [redacted] WHAT YOU DID WITH THE DNA FROM THE VAULT.
I'LL TELL YOU WHEN YOU TELL ME WHAT YOU ACED FROM STARK-FUJIKAWA...
WHERE DO YOU WANT TO EAT TONIGHT...
FIN.


NOW PLAYING
HAZZARD 2069
SCAN IT SPECS, IT'S LIKE WE'RE BACK IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURIS!MO.!
BUT WHERE'S HAP? HE'S THE ONE WE CAME TO SEE, RIGHT?
YEAH, WE WANT HAP-- EVEN IF HE IS ONLY A VR CHARACTER!
SCREETCH!
CALIFORNIA 2FAST4U
MICHAEL JAN FRIEDMAN · WRITER
GINO DeCICCO · PENCILER
DON HUDSON · INKER
ROD OLLERENSHAW · LETTERER
ROBBIE BUSCH · COLORIST
JOEY CAVALIERI · EDITOR
TOM DeFALCO · CHIEF


"THERE HE IS! THERE'S HAP!"
"GET 'EM, HAP!"
I'M TOO FAR BEHIND THE KIDNAPPERS--AND I'M GETTING BEHINDER BY THE SECOND.
WAIT A MINUTE. MAYBE I CAN TAKE THIS LOMBROW CHASE TO A HIGHER LEVEL...
GEEZ! WHAT WAS THAT?
...AND HEAD 'EM OFF AT THE PASS!
--OR MAKE MY INSURANCE PAYMENT!
KRUNCH!
SKREE
GUESS IT'S TOO LATE TO FASTEN MY SEATBELT--
MACK


I GUESS LOTUSLAND TEST-MARKETING A NEW VR HOLO DOWN THERE.
SET IN THE LAST CENTURY, FROM WHAT I CAN SEE.
LOOKS LIKE A CHASE SCENE, TOO. NOTHING LIKE THOSE RETRO PICTURES FOR BUTT-KICKIN' CHASES.
TOO BAD WE DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO ENJOY IT...
BUT THEY'RE WAITING FOR THIS IONIC ENERGY SOURCE DOWN IN PUERTO SEGUNDA. WITHOUT IT, THAT NEW WEAPON THEY DEVELOPED WOULD BE JUST ANOTHER HUNKA HIGH-TECH JUNK...
STARK-FIST
DANGER
...AND PUERTO SEGUNDA WOULDN'T STICK AROUND LONG ENOUGH TO GIVE US ANY REPEAT BUSINESS.
FUNNY THING ABOUT IONIC ENERGY... NOBODY KNOWS WHY IT ACTS AS A VIRTUALLY INEXHAUSTIBLE POWER SOURCE.
FUNNY? YOU GOT A FUNNY IDEA OF WHAT'S FUNNY.
"BUT OURS IS NOT TO REASON WHY. OURS IS BUT TO DUMP THE CONTAINMENT MODULE..."

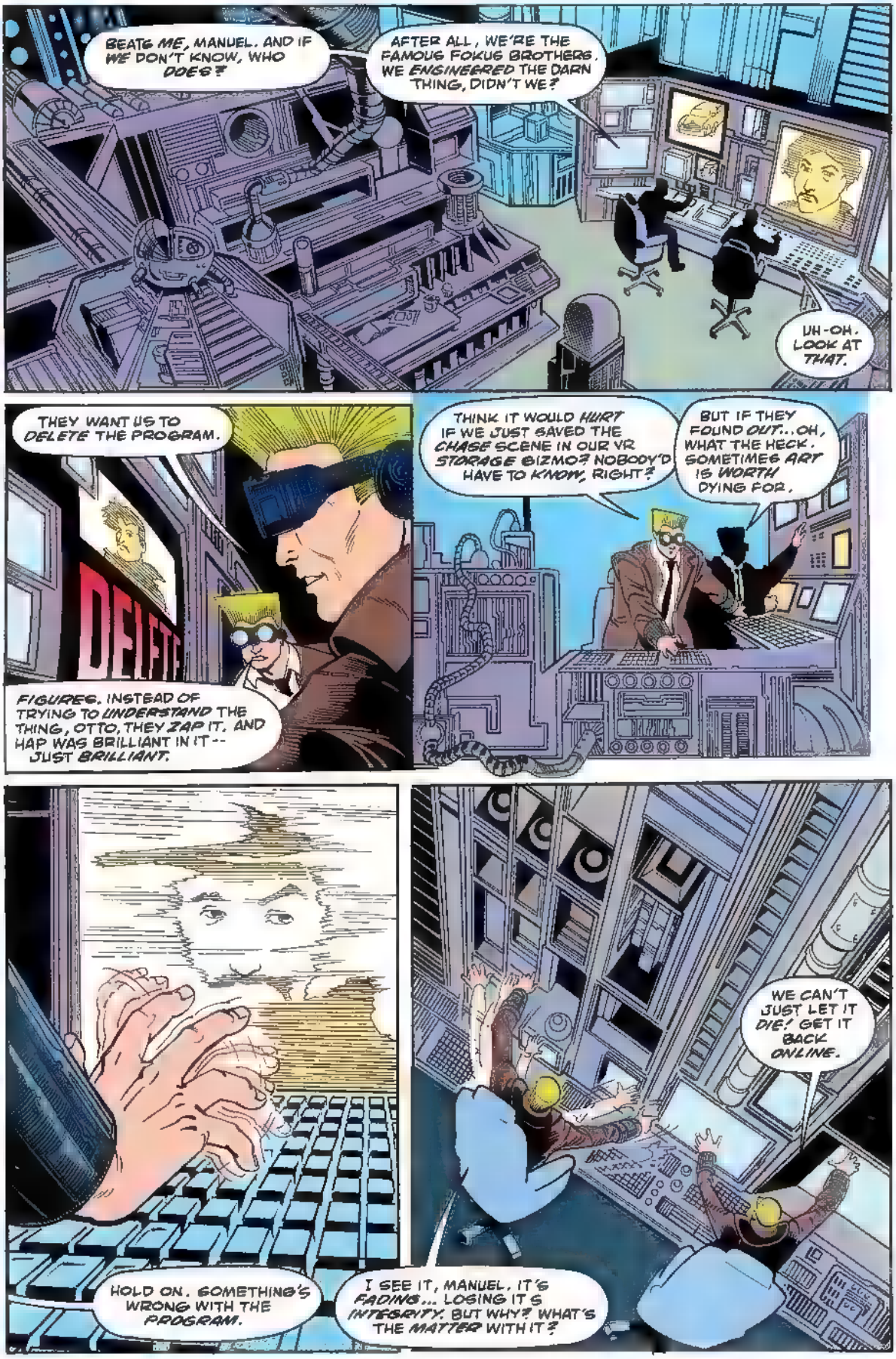
"AND GO HOME."
HERE I AM, SECONDS AWAY FROM BEING A GREASY SPOT ON THE ASPHALT...
MACK
FORTUNATELY, I MANAGE TO GRAB THE RELEASE LEVER-- JUST IN THE NICK OF TIME, WHATEVER A "NICK" IS.
"THEREBY UNLEASHING THESE BABIES ONE BY ONE ON AN UNEXPECTANT ROAD.
DELI · 24 HOUR · FRUIT
"WHICH IN TURN FORCES OUR DASTARDLY KIDNAPPER - TYPES TO MAKE AN UNSCHEDULED PIT STOP!"
WASN'T THAT CLEVER OF ME? HUH, WASN'T IT?
HOW COME YOU'RE NOT AGREEING? I GUESS IT'S HARD TO TALK WHEN YOU'VE GOT AN AIRBAG HALFWAY DOWN YOUR THROAT.
APPLES $2.99

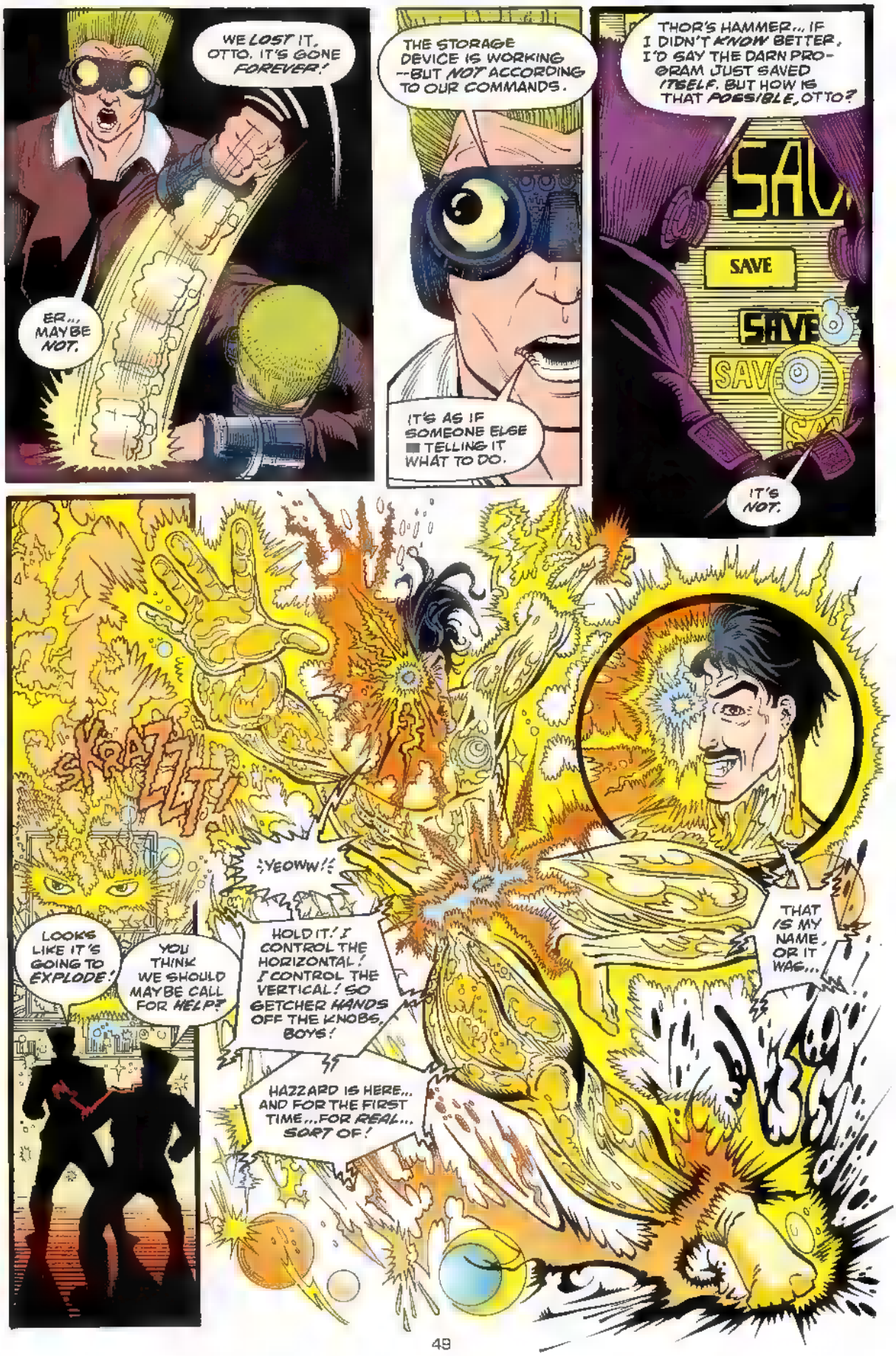
WHOOP WHOOP WHOOP
GO HOME, FOLKS! THERE'S NOTHING TO SEE HERE -- JUST SOME WOULD-BE KIDNAPPER WHO TOTALED A GROCERY STAND. HAPPENS EVERY DAY IN THIS TOWN.
YOU'RE SAFE NOW, MISS.
YES, BUT AT WHAT COST!
SHUCKS, DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME. I HEAL QUICKLY.
072-LA
WHO'S TALKING ABOUT YOU! THIS SILK JACKET'S NEVER GOING TO BE THE SAME.
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO GET OUT THESE GUAVA STAINS? COULDN'T YOU HAVE PICKED A NEATER PLACE FOR US TO CRASH INTO?
WHADDAYA THINK, FOLKS? ISN'T SHE JUST THE SWEETEST WEALTHY KID-NAP VICTIM YOU'VE EVER --?
¡BAUGH!! WHAT'S HAPPENING?!
THIS WASN'T IN THE SCRIPT!

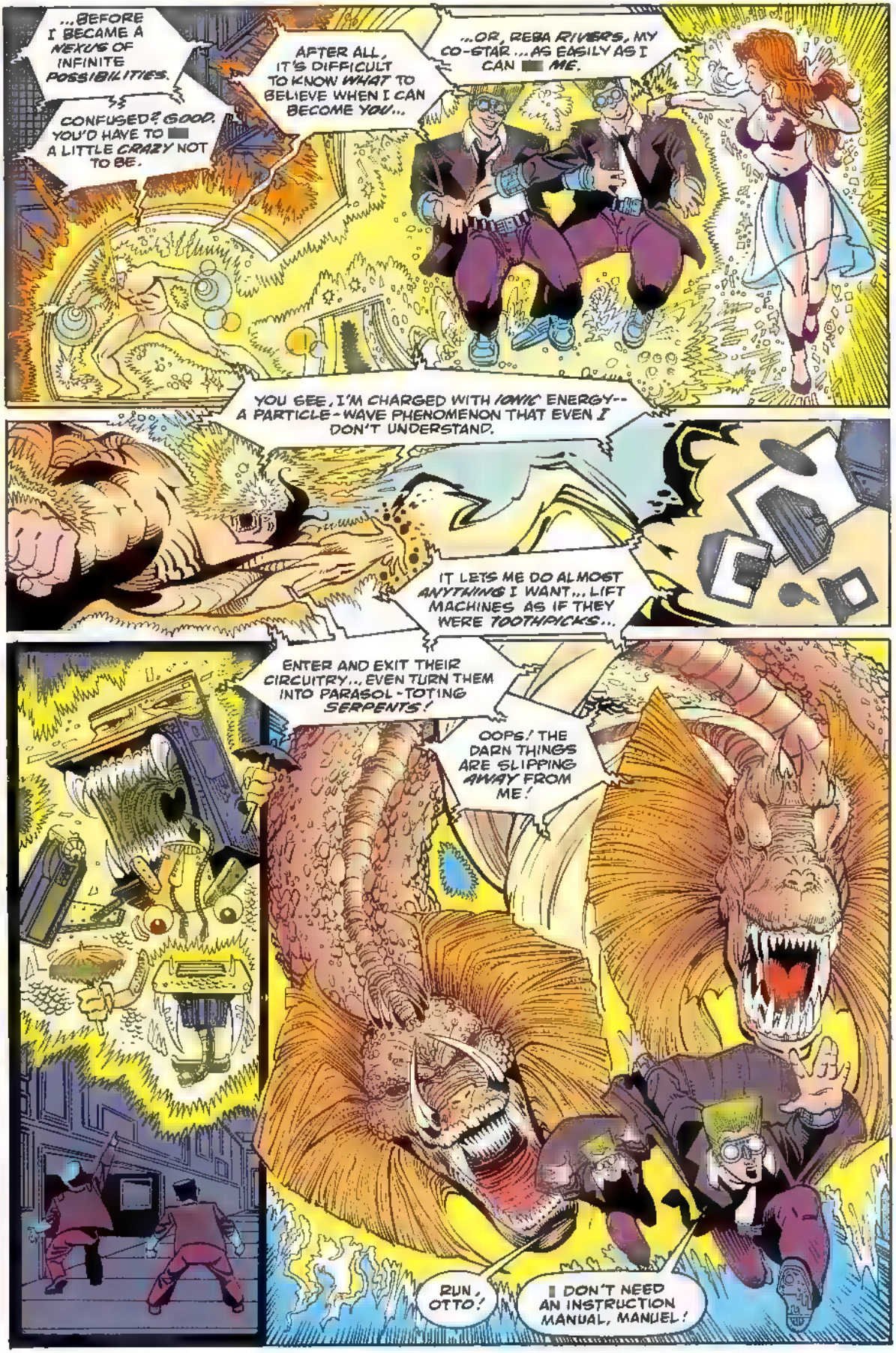
WOW... I FEEL DIFFERENT. LIKE I JUST CHANNELED THE SPIRITS OF A BILLION FIREFLIES.
MAYBE IT'S LOVE. LET'S SAUNTER OFF INTO THE SUNSET, MISS. CAN I CALL YOU, MISS?
YOU CAN CALL ME A CAB. AND IF YOU DON'T GET YOUR HANDS OFF ME, I'LL SCREAM.
WAIT HALF A [redacted] HERE, WHAT AM I DOING?
WHY AM I CONTRIBUTING SO EAGERLY TO THE LACK OF MEANING IN TODAY'S PROGRAMMING?
IF I WERE KING OF THE FOREST...
I'D LET THE PEOPLE MAKE THE VR FLICKS...
...AND FORCE THE BUREAUCRATS TO SIT AND WATCH THEM -- INSTEAD OF THE OTHER WAY AROUND.
WHAT ARE WE, AFTER ALL... PUPPETS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT? MINDS GOOD FOR NOTHING BUT TO THINK WHAT THEY TELL US TO THINK?
HOW MANY HERE ARE WEARING THEIR CORPORATION'S LOGO ON THEIR UNDERWEAR? -- SHOW OF HANDS!
TELL IT, HAP!
WAY TO GO, HAP!

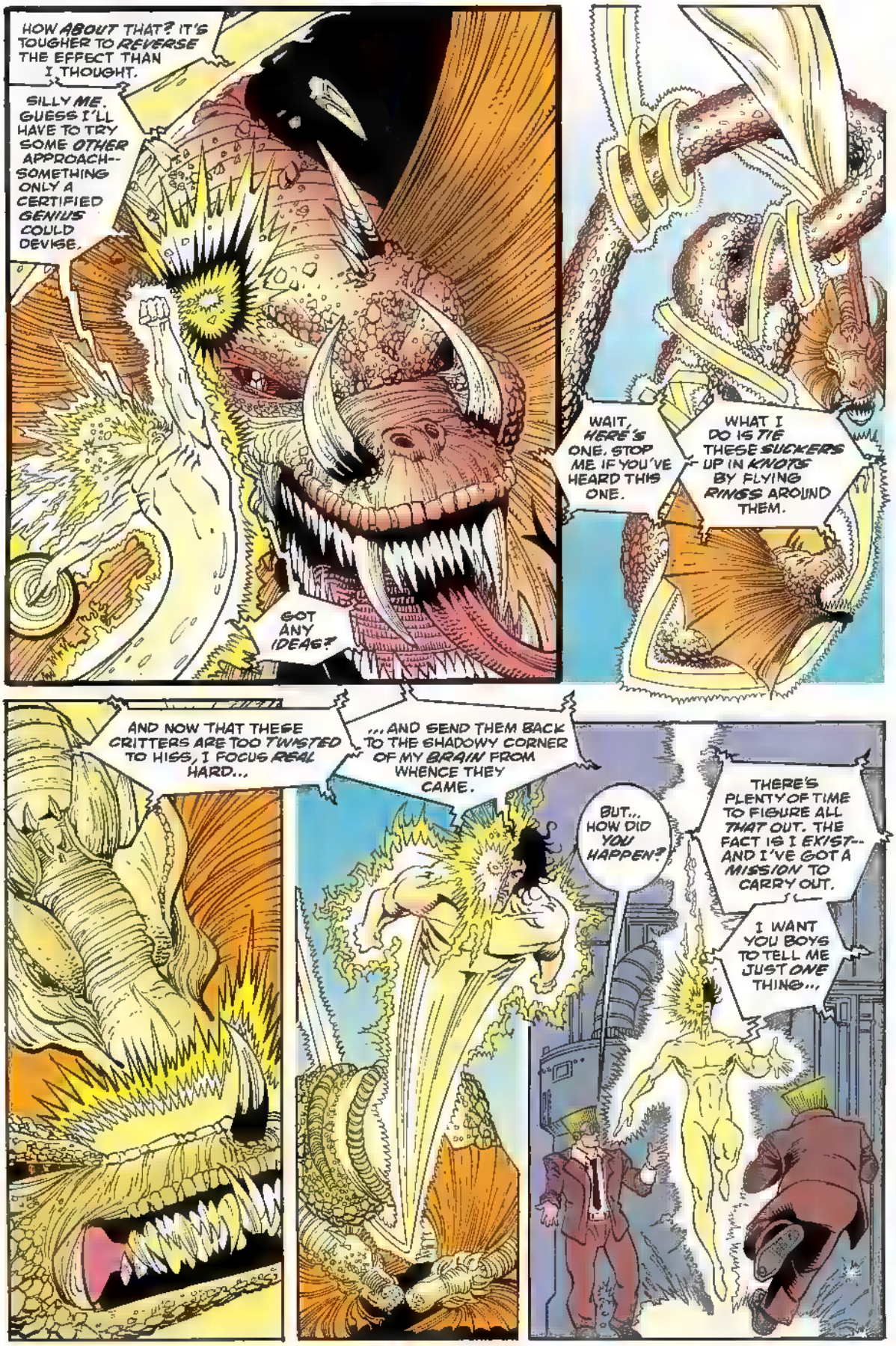
WHAT IN THE NAME OF SANITY IS GOING ON HERE?
LOOKS LIKE HAP HAZZARD HAS DEVELOPED A MIND OF HIS OWN...ER, DOESN'T IT, MISTER SARKISSIAN?
BUT VR CHARACTERS CAN'T HAVE MINDS OF THEIR OWN. THEY'RE NOT CAPABLE OF ACTING CONTRARY TO THEIR PROGRAMMING.
SOMETHING'S WRONG HERE. I MEAN TO SET IT RIGHT.
WE CAN'T HAVE ELECTRONIC IMAGES STARTING TROUBLE AMONG THE VERY CONSUMERS WE'RE TRYING TO KEEP IN LINE.
END PROGRAM! END IT NOW!
PUBLIC EYE? PUBLIC NUISANCE IS MORE LIKE IT.
THIS IS SO EMBARRASSING.
HEY, I'M JUST WARMING UP.
AND... WHOA! WHO TURNED OUT THE LIGHTS?
THEY'RE GONE!
--AND GOOD RIDDANCE. I NEVER LIKED THAT HAZZARD JOKER ANYWAY.

I WANT AN INVESTIGATION OF WHAT HAPPENED HERE TODAY. AND NONE OF THE HIGHER UPS ARE TO HEAR ABOUT IT... OR I'LL BE RUINED IN THIS TOWN.
WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, HAVE THE VR FOOTAGE DESTROYED. BAD ENOUGH A SMALL CROWD SAW IT. IF IT EVER GOT INTO THE PIRATE DISTRIBUTION STREAM...
I'LL GET RIGHT ON IT, MISTER SARKISSIAN.
AND ANOTHER... WHAT?! A SCRATCH ON MY BRAND NEW DELAROSSA 9000? HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?
NEVER MIND. COULD ANYTHING ELSE GO WRONG TODAY? MAYBE A VOLCANIC ERUPTION? A TIDAL WAVE?
DON'T FORGET. I WANT THAT VR TAPE ANNIHILATED.
NO PROBLEM, MR. SARKISSIAN!
NO SOONER SAID THAN DONE, MISTER SARKISSIAN!
"I DON'T GET IT, OTTO. WHAT COULD POSSIBLY HAVE GONE WRONG?"

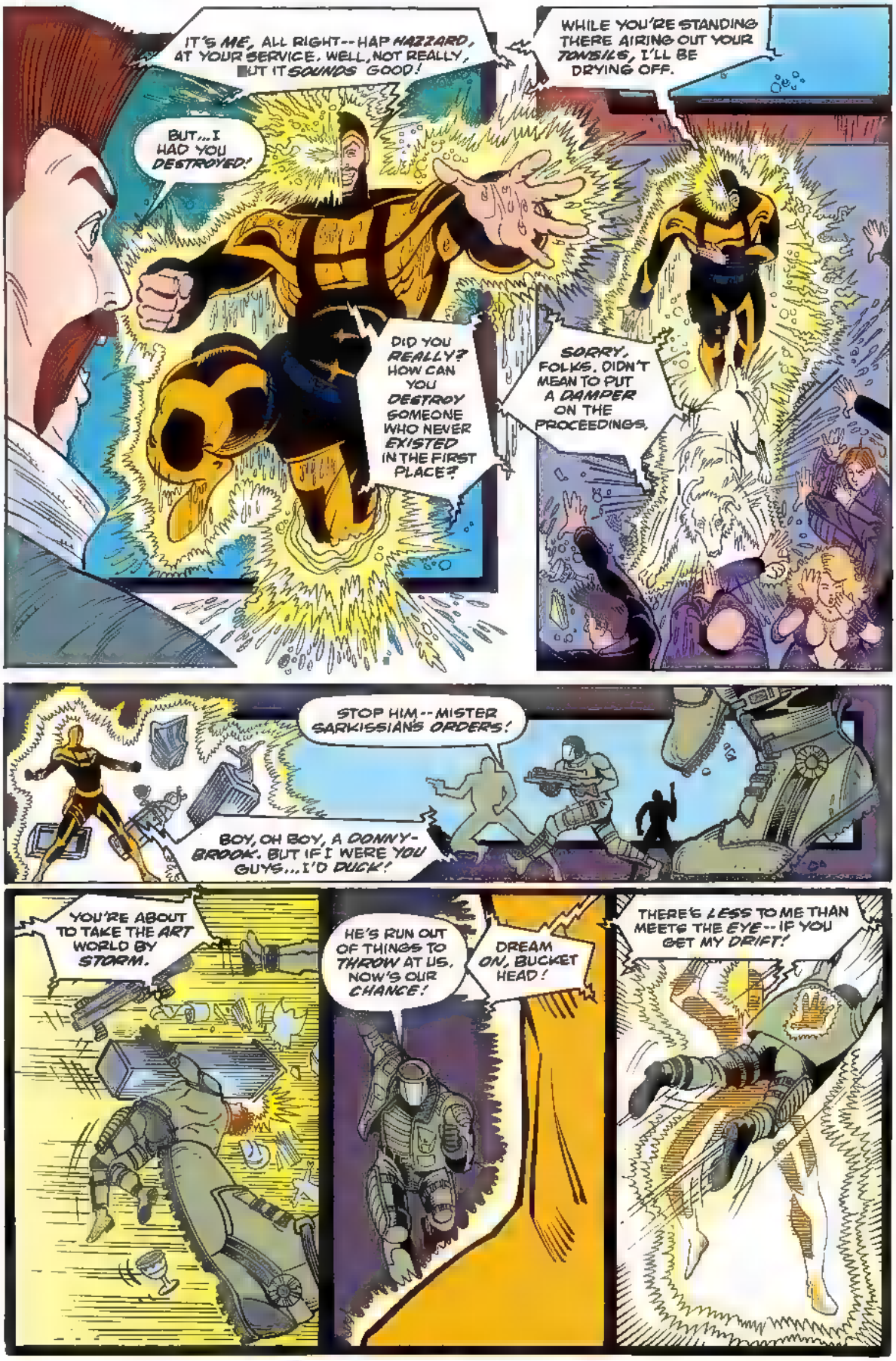

BEATS ME, MANUEL. AND IF WE DON'T KNOW, WHO DOES?
AFTER ALL, WE'RE THE FAMOUS FOKUS BROTHERS. WE ENGINEERED THE DARN THING, DIDN'T WE?
UH-OH. LOOK AT THAT.
THEY WANT US TO DELETE THE PROGRAM.
DELETE
FIGURES. INSTEAD OF TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THE THING, OTTO, THEY ZAP IT. AND HAP WAS BRILLIANT IN IT -- JUST BRILLIANT.
THINK IT WOULD HURT IF WE JUST SAVED THE CHASE SCENE IN OUR VR STORAGE GIZMO? NOBODY'D HAVE TO KNOW, RIGHT?
BUT IF THEY FOUND OUT... OH, WHAT THE HECK. SOMETIMES ART IS WORTH DYING FOR.
HOLD ON. SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH THE PROGRAM.
I SEE IT, MANUEL. IT'S FADING... LOSING ITS INTEGRITY. BUT WHY? WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH IT?
WE CAN'T JUST LET IT DIE! GET IT BACK ONLINE.

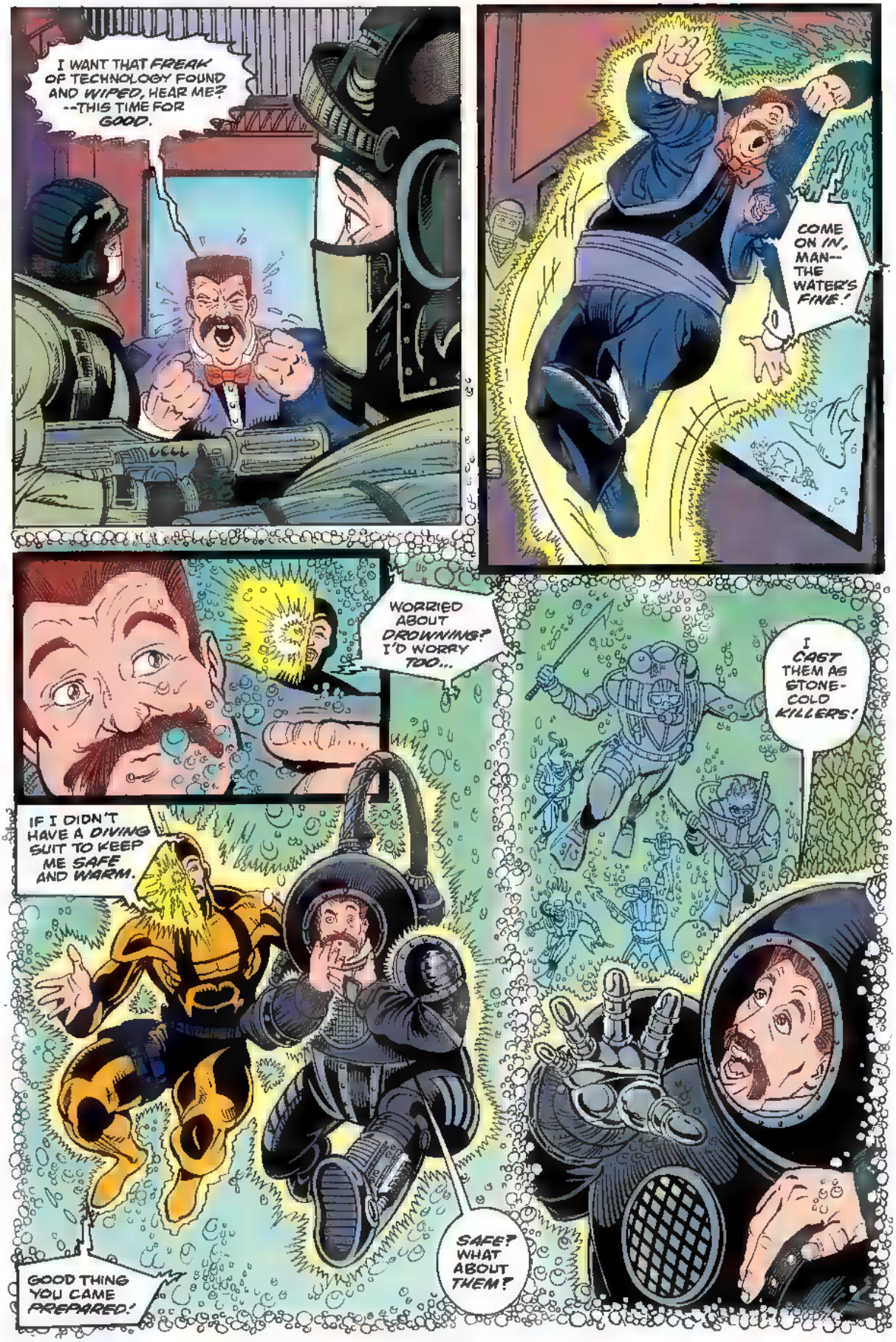

WE LOST IT, OTTO. IT'S GONE FOREVER!
ER... MAYBE NOT.
THE STORAGE DEVICE IS WORKING --BUT NOT ACCORDING TO OUR COMMANDS.
IT'S AS IF SOMEONE ELSE ■ TELLING IT WHAT TO DO.
THOR'S HAMMER... IF I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER, I'D SAY THE DARN PROGRAM JUST SAVED ITSELF. BUT HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE, OTTO?
SAVE
IT'S NOT.
KRAZGT!
YEOWW!
LOOKS LIKE IT'S GOING TO EXPLODE!
YOU THINK WE SHOULD MAYBE CALL FOR HELP?
HOLD IT! I CONTROL THE HORIZONTAL! I CONTROL THE VERTICAL! SO GETCHER HANDS OFF THE KNOBS, BOYS!
HAZZARD IS HERE... AND FOR THE FIRST TIME...FOR REAL... SORT OF!
THAT IS MY NAME, OR IT WAS...

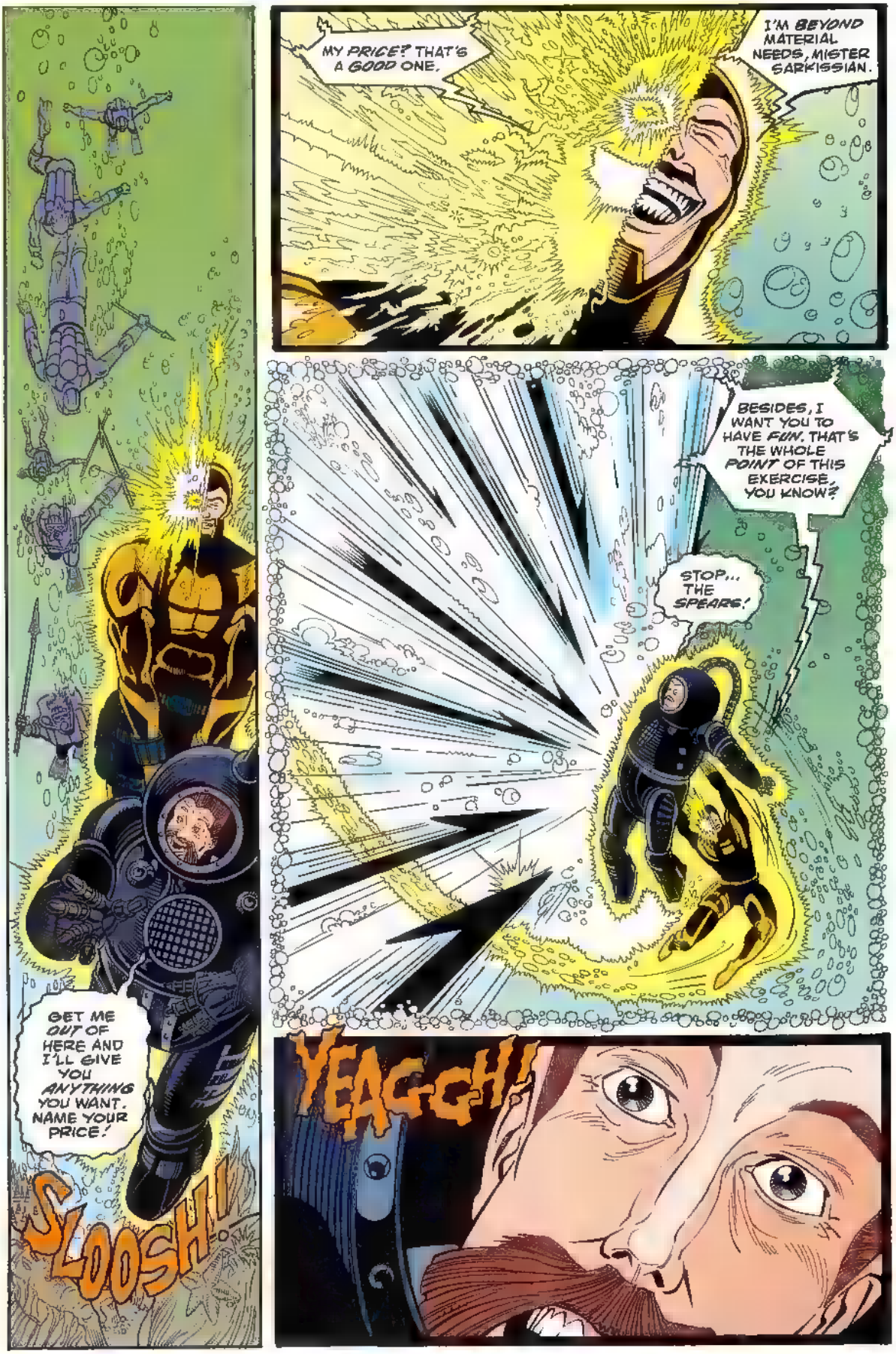

...BEFORE I BECAME A NEXUS OF INFINITE POSSIBILITIES.
CONFUSED? GOOD. YOU'D HAVE TO [redacted] A LITTLE CRAZY NOT TO BE.
AFTER ALL, IT'S DIFFICULT TO KNOW WHAT TO BELIEVE WHEN I CAN BECOME YOU...
...OR, REBA RIVERS, MY CO-STAR...AS EASILY AS I CAN [redacted] ME.
YOU SEE, I'M CHARGED WITH IONIC ENERGY--A PARTICLE-WAVE PHENOMENON THAT EVEN I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
IT LETS ME DO ALMOST ANYTHING I WANT... LIFT MACHINES AS IF THEY WERE TOOTHPICKS...
ENTER AND EXIT THEIR CIRCUITRY... EVEN TURN THEM INTO PARASOL-TOTING SERPENTS!
OOPS! THE DARN THINGS ARE SLIPPING AWAY FROM ME!
RUN, OTTO!
I DON'T NEED AN INSTRUCTION MANUAL, MANUEL!

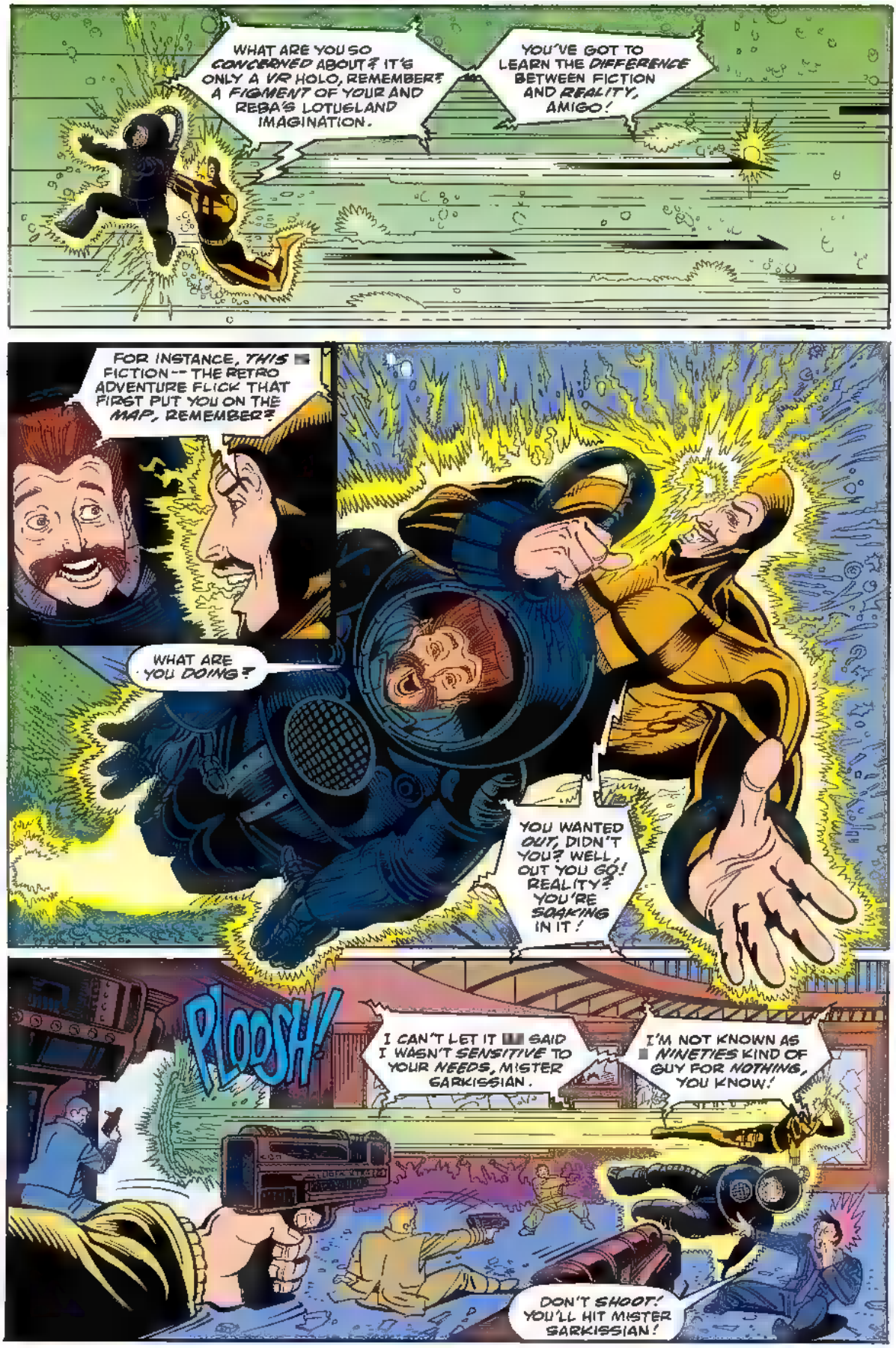

HOW ABOUT THAT? IT'S TOUGHER TO REVERSE THE EFFECT THAN I THOUGHT.
SILLY ME. GUESS I'LL HAVE TO TRY SOME OTHER APPROACH-- SOMETHING ONLY A CERTIFIED GENIUS COULD DEVISE.
GOT ANY IDEAS?
WAIT, HERE'S ONE. STOP ME IF YOU'VE HEARD THIS ONE.
WHAT I DO IS TIE THESE SUCKERS UP IN KNOTS BY FLYING RINGS AROUND THEM.
AND NOW THAT THESE CRITTERS ARE TOO TWISTED TO HISS, I FOCUS REAL HARD...
...AND SEND THEM BACK TO THE SHADOWY CORNER OF MY BRAIN FROM WHENCE THEY CAME.
BUT... HOW DID YOU HAPPEN?
THERE'S PLENTY OF TIME TO FIGURE ALL THAT OUT. THE FACT IS I EXIST-- AND I'VE GOT A MISSION TO CARRY OUT.
I WANT YOU BOYS TO TELL ME JUST ONE THING...

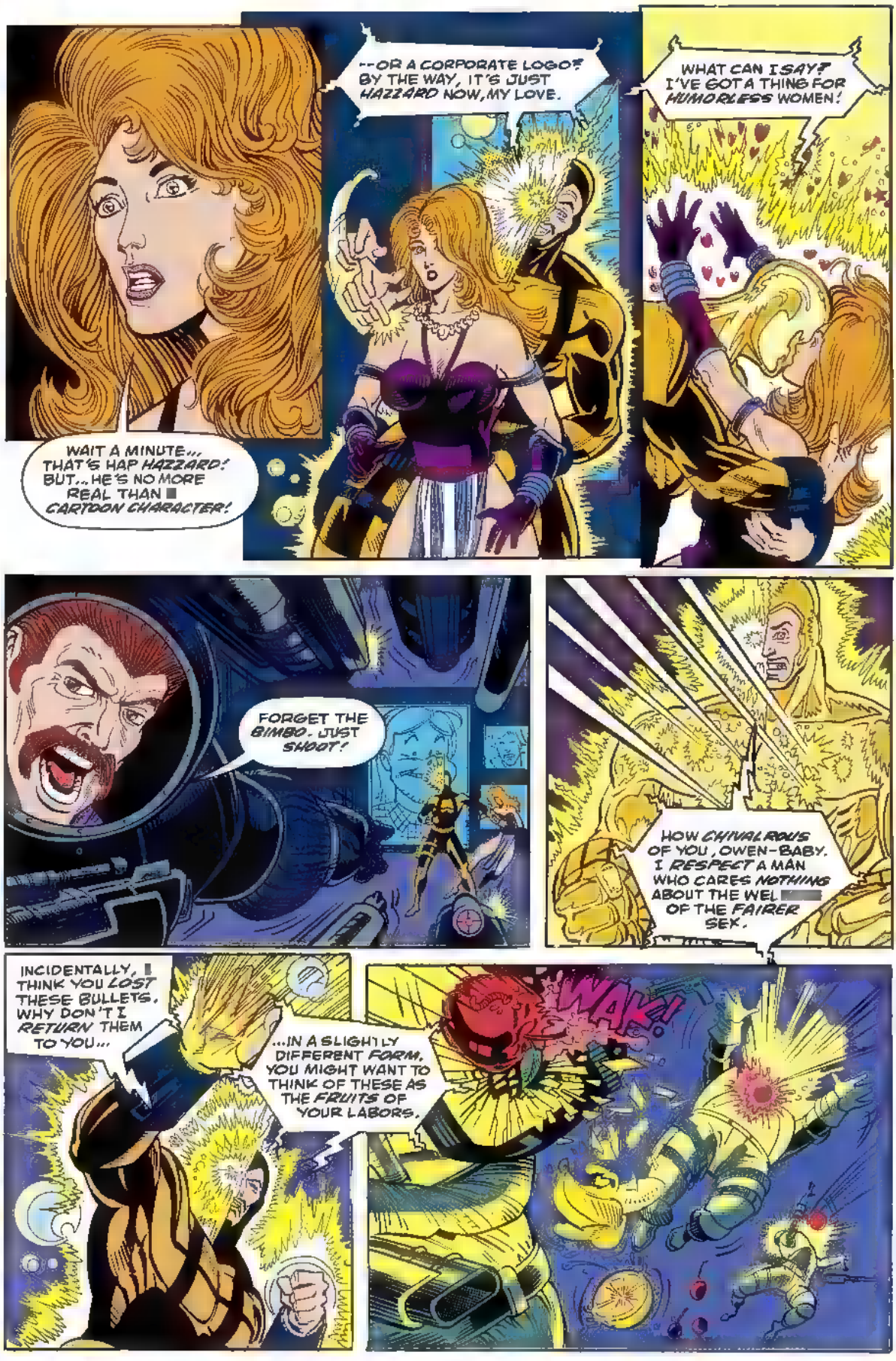
"WHAT LAME-O ORDERED MY DEATH?"
YOU THINK IT'S AN ORIGINAL?
AT OWEN SARKISSIAN'S PLACE? IT'S GOT TO BE.
AN EXPLANATION, REBA? SINCE WHEN DOES YOURS TRULY OFFER ANYONE AN EXPLANATION?
OWEN, HONEY... ONE DOESN'T JUST DUMP A REBA RIVERS VR FOR NO REASON AT ALL. MY PICKS ARE BOX OFFICE.
SO WHEN I HEARD THAT YOU'D SCRAGGED MY NEW RETRO PRODUCTION, I NATURALLY WONDERED WHY.
LISTEN, REBA. THERE WERE PROBLEMS WITH THAT PICTURE. [redacted] PROBLEMS ALL RIGHT?
TRUST ME WHEN I TELL YOU THAT THE CORPORATION WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN PLEASED. AND IF STARK-FUJUKAWA ISN'T PLEASED, NEITHER OF US IS --
OH, COME ON, OWEN-HONEY. TELL HER THE REAL REASON.
oh... my... LORD!
ISN'T THAT--?


IT'S ME, ALL RIGHT--HAP HAZZARD, AT YOUR SERVICE. WELL, NOT REALLY, BUT IT SOUNDS GOOD!
BUT... I HAD YOU DESTROYED!
DID YOU REALLY? HOW CAN YOU DESTROY SOMEONE WHO NEVER EXISTED IN THE FIRST PLACE?
WHILE YOU'RE STANDING THERE AIRING OUT YOUR TONSILS, I'LL BE DRYING OFF.
SORRY, FOLKS. DIDN'T MEAN TO PUT A DAMPER ON THE PROCEEDINGS.
STOP HIM--MISTER SARKISSIAN'S ORDERS!
BOY, OH BOY, A DONNY-BROOK. BUT IF I WERE YOU GUYS... I'D DUCK!
YOU'RE ABOUT TO TAKE THE ART WORLD BY STORM.
HE'S RUN OUT OF THINGS TO THROW AT US. NOW'S OUR CHANCE!
DREAM ON, BUCKET HEAD!
THERE'S LESS TO ME THAN MEETS THE EYE--IF YOU GET MY DRIFT!


I WANT THAT FREAK OF TECHNOLOGY FOUND AND WIPED, HEAR ME? --THIS TIME FOR GOOD.
COME ON IN, MAN-- THE WATER'S FINE!
WORRIED ABOUT DROWNING? I'D WORRY TOO...
I CAST THEM AS STONE-COLD KILLERS!
IF I DIDN'T HAVE A DIVING SUIT TO KEEP ME SAFE AND WARM.
GOOD THING YOU CAME PREPARED!
SAFE? WHAT ABOUT THEM?


MY PRICE? THAT'S A GOOD ONE.
I'M BEYOND MATERIAL NEEDS, MISTER SARKISSIAN.
BESIDES, I WANT YOU TO HAVE FUN. THAT'S THE WHOLE POINT OF THIS EXERCISE, YOU KNOW?
STOP... THE SPEARS!
GET ME OUT OF HERE AND I'LL GIVE YOU ANYTHING YOU WANT. NAME YOUR PRICE!
SLOOSH!
YEAGGH!


WHAT ARE YOU SO CONCERNED ABOUT? IT'S ONLY A VR HOLO, REMEMBER? A FIGMENT OF YOUR AND REBA'S LOTUSLAND IMAGINATION.
YOU'VE GOT TO LEARN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FICTION AND REALITY, AMIGO!
FOR INSTANCE, THIS FICTION -- THE RETRO ADVENTURE FLICK THAT FIRST PUT YOU ON THE MAP, REMEMBER?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
YOU WANTED OUT, DIDN'T YOU? WELL, OUT YOU GO! REALITY? YOU'RE SOAKING IN IT!
PLOOSH!
I CAN'T LET IT SAID I WASN'T SENSITIVE TO YOUR NEEDS, MISTER SARKISSIAN.
I'M NOT KNOWN AS NINETIES KIND OF GUY FOR NOTHING, YOU KNOW!
DON'T SHOOT! YOU'LL HIT MISTER SARKISSIAN!


WAIT A MINUTE... THAT'S HAP HAZZARD! BUT... HE'S NO MORE REAL THAN A CARTOON CHARACTER!
--OR A CORPORATE LOGO? BY THE WAY, IT'S JUST HAZZARD NOW, MY LOVE.
WHAT CAN I SAY? I'VE GOT A THING FOR HUMORLESS WOMEN!
FORGET THE BIMBO. JUST SHOOT!
HOW CHIVALROUS OF YOU, OWEN-BABY. I RESPECT A MAN WHO CARES NOTHING ABOUT THE WEL OF THE FAIRER SEX.
INCIDENTALLY, I THINK YOU LOST THESE BULLETS. WHY DON'T I RETURN THEM TO YOU...
...IN A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT FORM, YOU MIGHT WANT TO THINK OF THESE AS THE FRUITS OF YOUR LABORS.
WAK!

NOW FOR THE PIECE [redacted] RESISTANCE... A CINEMATIC VEHICLE TRULY WORTHY OF OWEN SARKISSIAN'S BRILLIANCE.
I'D STAY AND AWAIT IT'S ARRIVAL WITH THE REST OF YOU... BUT I'VE HAD MY SHARE OF CAR CRASHES TODAY.
DON'T HURT MY BABY, HAZZARD. I'LL DO ANYTHING YOU WANT... JUST LEAVE HER ALONE!
CRASH
I TOLD YOU, SARKISSIAN-- WHAT'S ON THAT SCREEN ISN'T REAL. IT'S A FANTASY.
ON THE OTHER HAND...
THIS IS REALITY!
KRUNCH!

I HATE TO WRECK AND RUN, BUT I'M A LITTLE OUT OF MY ELEMENT HERE.
I'LL GET YOU FOR THIS, HAZZARD! I'LL FIND A WAY TO MAKE YOU PAY!
RRRING!
SARKISSIAN!
BOSS? IS THAT... YOU?
"YOU CALLED HIS SUPERIOR?"
IN A WORD, OTTO... YES. YOU SEE, UNBEKNOWNST TO HIS CURRENT EMPLOYER, SARKISSIAN WAS CUTTING A DEAL WITH ALCHEMAX.
OF COURSE, THAT INFORMATION WAS EASILY ACCESSIBLE IN ALCHEMAX'S DATANET-- AS LONG AS YOU KNEW WHERE TO LOOK FOR IT.
WOW!
ALL THINGS BEING EQUAL, OWEN SARKISSIAN MIGHT WANT TO LIE LOW FOR A WHILE...
I, BY CONTRAST, INTEND TO MAKE A SPLASH--AND A BIG ONE.
AFTER ALL, I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO WAS WRONGED BY A CORPORATION IN THIS ERA. MY TRAVELS THROUGH THE DATANETS SHOWED ME THAT.
SO LOOK OUT, WORLD--HAZZARD IS BACK. AND THAT'S NO FISH STORY!
END!

UNLIMITED

JOEY CAVALIERI — Editor LIA PELOSI — Assistant Editor

ALL LETTERS FOR PUBLICATION MUST INCLUDE YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS, ALTHOUGH WE WILL GLADLY WITHHOLD THAT INFORMATION UPON REQUEST.

Out Of My Head

WHY WE LOVE KYLE

Kyle's in town. Mort found him and brought him by. "You wanted a cover from me?" asked Kyle.

Quickly, I agreed. "Yeah, something with Hulk 2099 and Duke Stratosphere."

"Just standing there? Can't they fight?"

"They don't fight."

"Well, who can the Hulk fight?"

"The issue's villain." I showed him a picture of Vulx.

"Can either of these guys shoot rays out of their eyes?"

"No. The Hulk's got a big tongue, but he doesn't shoot rays."

"Are you sure? Can they throw boulders at each other?"

"A boulder is good. I'll put the logo on it!"

"Great! What's the guy look like?"

"The Hulk? Kyle, you *drew him* in issue #2!"

"Can we get a woman screaming on this cover?"

"Yeah, *that's* good for 50,000 more sales. How 'bout Quirk?"

"Who's that?"

"Kyle, *you drew her in issue #2!*"

"Can she shoot rays from her eyes?"

"Kyle..."

"Can we have the background on fire for no apparent reason?"

"Kyle..."

"How about another cover of just the Hulk?"

"Great!"

"Can he be busting through a wall?"

"A wall is good."

Mort laughs. "This is high concept?"

At this point, we're so loud, other office doors slam shut.

"You'll have the cover Friday!"

I should worry? Even if he's late, I can use it on the Hulk's new mag.

Unless he's shooting rays from his eyes.

Dear Joey and Matt,

This is about the "rules" that ran in your "Out Of My Head" column in THE PUNISHER 2099 #8, RAVAGE 2099 #11 and SPIDEY 2099 #12. Before I tell you the problems I had with them, let me give you a little background. I'm 28, received a degree in science education and taught high school science for four years to students ranging in ability from those who could barely read to those at the top of their class. I worked at a bookstore for two years. Finally, for fifteen years, I've read comics, played role-playing games and read all kinds of books. For these reasons, I always try to get people to be open-minded when it comes to entertainment reading.

The first problem I had with your Rules was your claim that you went into the "science fiction section." I've never heard of any bookstore that even tries to separate sf from fantasy. Even moreso, I have to say that anyone who only checks out a single section of books is doing themselves a great disservice. There are plenty of books out there that fit into different categories such as sf, mysteries and horror. By just looking in one section, you'll miss these! If you try another section, you might find that you like that genre also!

So when you look at two sections that overlap as much as fantasy and sf, you should quickly realize that it's nearly impossible for us to separate them.

Rules 4 & 5 took me by surprise. I couldn't believe anyone who works in comics (the king of all sequel makers) would suggest a story be told in one installment! As long as an author continues to explore different facets of the character, let them. It's like visiting old and dear friends.

As for rule 6, I find it ironic that I've had several discussions over the years with comics as the focus. People claimed that comics were merely a waste of time better spent reading real books. My answer's always been the same: that if you're reading for your own pleasure, reading what you like is never a waste. If you read what you like, you will like to read and you will read more. After dealing with as many students as I did (who told me, "I don't like to read"), you learn that getting students to read should be a primary goal of all teachers.

I also have to disagree with your thinking on rule 8. Everyone does not know how all classical tales, Shakespeare's plays, myths and fairy tales end. If you do know, big deal! If it's a classic, it deserves to be retold. If an author rewrites one of these as an sf novel, it should have twists and turns that you don't know about. So give it a chance.

So here are the New Rules:

1) Look at all of the sections in a bookstore. If it looks good, try it. Don't worry about the so-called classification.

2) Ignore the best-seller lists. Make up your own mind.

3) Ignore authors on talk shows. Make up your own mind.

4) It doesn't matter what you read, as long as you read.

5) Don't try to limit what other people read.

David Caldwell
Route 1, Box 168B
Clyde, NC 28721

You bring up some valid rebuttals to Joey's snotty remarks, Dave, but where did you get the idea that Joey or anybody else up here frequents *only* one section of the bookstore? You oughta see Joey's place: it makes the Library at Alexandria look like a garage sale. The whole point of rule 6 was to "at least consider" shopping somewhere else in the store, remember?

That said, while your plea for letting people read what they want is welcome, generous, good-spirited and well-intentioned, the rules were brought about in the first place because Joey couldn't get what *he* wanted at the bookstore: original, thought-provoking, contemporary, self-contained, more rigidly-structured sf of the kind he prefers...because it's being crowded off the rack by the *other* stuff!

For more on this debate, there's a fine essay in the November '93 issue of *Science Fiction Age*. Scope it out if you can still find a copy.

Dear Unlimited Men,

Let me compliment you on one of the most ingenious creations in mainstream comics to come around in a long time, namely the 2099 Universe.

In front of me I hold issue #3 of 2099 UNLIMITED and I am somewhat bemused. Let me tell you why. First off I think that the Hulk has proven successful enough for his own limited series. You premiered him here; let's see something new. Get Spider-Man out of the book. I like the idea of different creative teams handling characters who have their own titles. Put Doom, Ravage or the Punisher in, or maybe even Xi'an or Bloodhawk of the X-Men 2099.

As for the new frontiers offered by R-Gang and the Kid Current strips, I'm somewhat ambivalent. I like new things but sometimes they can be hard to swallow. Kid Current deserves his own one-shot. I like the idea of showing the world of 2099 and not just the super hero portion. Another idea for the third space in the mag would be Punisher Armory 2099 or Secrets of Doom's Armor.

A frightening thing came to my attention the other day. You said you were thinking of a 2099/present-day crossover. I say thee nay, nay NAY! To do so would upset the uniqueness of the 2099 universe and make it just a foolish extension of Marvel continuity. I'm already upset over Spider-Man 2099's appearance in THOR CORPS and Darkhawk's sojourn into 2099. It's like the temptation to crossover the Marvel Universe with the New Universe. Such a thing upsets the singularity of an event, mucking with the genius of an idea. If 2099 needs the Marvel Universe to survive, I'd rather see it die a dignified death than become fouled up.

Phillip Spencer
5133 Muskrat Rd.
Weed, CA 96094

We don't *have* to do a 2099/present-day crossover to survive, Phil, but we sure get mail clamoring for it. If you agree or not, make your voice heard! By the way, if we do give a new character a one-shot, would you get over your ambivalence long enough to support it? Let us know!

To the UNLIMITED team,

Great work from all the people in 2099! Fantastic and wonderful on the Hulk 2099! The way it followed the "Fall of the Hammer" in issue #3 was pretty excellent!

I think the Hulk should stay in the UNLIMITED book for now. He needs to be developed more. In this book you can do that and more.

As far as that poll someone mentioned in last issue's letters page, here are my choices.

1) Best Character—Spider-Man 2099. He was the first and best!

2) Best Costume—Doom 2099. His armor is more advanced and more cool than his original.

3) Best Villain—Vulture 2099. Crazed and deranged, the way it should be.

4) Best Supporting Character—Wire. The cyberspace rider is great in all ways.

5) Most Changed Character—Ravage 2099. From man to beast, how much more changed can you get?

6) Best Issue—X-MEN 2099 #1. A great debut for a new team.

7) Best Storyline—DOOM 2099 #1-4. He takes his country back and now the world.

8) Best Death—Vulture 2099. Who knows for sure if he's really dead, but it was great.

Bart Tully
33-3362 62nd St.
Jackson Heights, NY 11372

9) Best Fans—2099 fans!

Well, Bart, we agree that the Hulk 2099 needs to be developed more; we just disagree on how to do it! See the news elsewhere!

Dear Joey and Matt,

I love the 2099 Universe. I collect the following: RAVAGE 2099, DOOM 2099, PUNISHER 2099, SPIDER-MAN 2099 and the 2099 UNLIMITED. UNLIMITED #3 was spectacular! Your Hulk is very smart: he showed it in "Water God" on pages 22-23.

John Eisenhart is a great Hulk. He's much better and cooler than the original version. Give this Hulk some new villains that are as savage and intelligent as he can be! I have the first part of the crossover. Thor 2099 is real cool! He and Spidey 2099 had a totally outrageous battle. I can't wait for the rest!

(Name & address withheld by request)

One villain as savage and intelligent as the Hulk coming up! Check out the Next Issue box!

Dear UNLIMITED,

I love all the 2099 titles! Especially X-MEN 2099, SPIDER-MAN 2099 and 2099 UNLIMITED! The art is spectacular! I'd like to see a limited series of the Hulk 2099. I like the Hulk stories more than the Spidey stories but, hey, that's me. Until Hulk 2099 gets a mohawk on his back, make mine Marvel 2099!

Arthur Bond
4615 Labrador Lane
Lockeysville, MD 21030

Gee, we thought that was a mohawk on his back!

Dear Joey,

Okay, I'll admit it, I'm a 2099 addict! I've purchased and read every issue of every title. Marvel has achieved what it failed to do previously: it has built a wonderful new universe separate from the present one.

I'm begging you to keep it separate. Having some manner of time travel story would shatter the illusion of this being the real future of the Marvel Universe.

My favorite aspect of 2099 is the way Thor has cast his godlike influence on it. The whole idea of the Thorites just seems natural. I am also impressed by the 2099 cyberverse. Surely explorations into such a special realm should be kept to short, inspired trips such as "Kid Current On-Line." If you could come up with a credible Cyber-Thor, now that would be a winner. Thanks for listening.

Bill Hall
556 Main St.
Cromwell, CT 06416

It's no illusion, Bill. This *is* the future of the Marvel Universe. We're not exactly sure that a time travel story would change that, but your "no" vote on the 2099/present-day crossover is acknowledged. What do the rest of you think? Vote now!

Dear 2099 UNLIMITED,

You guys have created a very interesting character with the Hulk 2099. Aside from the name he really has no direct connection with the present-day Hulk at all! He is a totally new character. It's easy to see why he appears so fearsome on the outside, he lives in a very dark world and has to adjust to it in his own way.

Now as to the question of whether or not the world of 2099 is a dark and desolate world, well there is no question that it is. Comic books have always looked at society from many different viewpoints. It seems that when you first started writing down some ideas of what the world might be like in a century's time you appeared to take the dark ends of it such as pollution, nuclear accidents, the destruction of the ozone layer and other modern day problems. Then pictured what the world would be like if these problems were not solved. The result is the dehumanized world that we see in 2099. Do any of us really want to live in such a world? I think not!

Now here's the $64,000 question: will the Hulk 2099 ever meet the present day Hulk? If so, would they become friends or bitter rivals? It's certainly worth considering for future issues. Thanks for reading.

Robert Moraes
33 Colfax Dr.
Pequannock, NJ 07440

A Hulk/Hulk 2099 crossover? Hmmm...

Dear UNLIMITED,

I think the new 2099 series is great! It gives us a look into the future and its heroes. Of all the 2099 heroes I think Spider-Man 2099 is the best. The idea of having the 2099 UNLIMITED is fantastic. Now we can see all of the heroes of the future without giving them each their own series. Everybody asks for a different hero with their own series but with the UNLIMITED you can satisfy everyone!

Andrew Long
2119 Lime Blossom
San Antonio, TX 78247

Our thoughts exactly, Andrew.

Dear UNLIMITED,

I'm writing to answer your question about giving the Hulk 2099 his own title. I say YES! However, since 2099 UNLIMITED is a melting pot for new ideas in the 2099 Universe, I would also say that he belongs here. Perhaps if you find another idea that you want to experiment with without commiting it to a new monthly title, you can give that big green heathen his own title and let the other idea take his place in the UNLIMITED world. But either way I like the Hulk. But, uh, could you remove the spike things from his tongue? They're kind of gross.

I would also like to see more of other characters from the other 2099 titles. So far other than a couple of off-the-wall stories, the only characters have been the Hulk and Spider-Man 2099.

In parting I would like to say that all the people who worked on the UNLIMITED and the other 2099 tuitles have done a great job. I congratulate you.

Michael Payne
74 Box 515
Graham, TX 76450

Replace the Hulk? Guess we *will* need something... what do you guys suggest?

SO MUCH MORE OF MARVEL 2099 WE CAN HARDLY STAND IT OURSELVES

If you've picked up any other 2099 mag this month, you've read the news in this box...we're gettin' ready to do a HULK 2099 ongoing series!

The only reason we're confident enough to do so is due solely to your response! You've been so enthusiastic toward the character and the idea of a new 2099, that we're forging ahead!

Again, our sincere thanks!

NEXT ISSUE

Hey! Just because we're givin' the Chartreuse Crusader (yecch! Those nicknames stink, don't they?) his own mag, it doesn't mean you can expect his departure from these pages just yet! Besides, there's no law sayin' he can't be both places at once, right? Spidey 2099 did it!

So, be with us when the Verdant Vanquisher (yecch! See what we mean?) meets the Golden One! Also, two *new* 2099 concepts! Are we big-hearted or what?

UNLIMITED EXTRA

ITEM! Welp, here we are again, just three short months after we left you! Did you miss us?

ITEM! Look! Another gratuitous caricature of the 2099 group editor and mayor of Toontown! This one was done on a Christmas card by World's Greatest Intern, **Chia-Chi Wang!** True to our promise, we *did* make **Chi** a character in the 2099 universe! We're just not revealing exactly where yet!

ITEM! So, by now you've read the news, and you know that we're putting THE HULK 2099 in his own mag! **Gerry Jones** is continuing his fine stint as chief scribe of the Great Green One's mighty misadventures! So where does that leave *this* mag, you ask?

We're continuing to feature our colossal sensation in 2099 UNLIMITED, for the time being. But you know us...we hate for any line-up to remain the same for too long! So if you have a suggestion for a feature that should appear here: a supporting cast member you're dying to see more of, or a new character or villain from any of our other 2099 mags that you think would make a great solo feature, now's the time to let us know!

We've got a few surprises and some concepts we genuinely feel will take your breath away...but why rely on guesswork when we can hear what you want directly from you? There's no better time to make a mark on the 2099 universe...so don't put it off...write today! You know where to find us!

ITEM! Speaking of "where to find us," let's repeat our request from last ish...If any of you fans are on-line somewhere out in the uncharted wilds of cyberspace, please write and let us know! We're dying with curiosity to how many of you guys are talking to each other (and the occasional pros who pop up now and then on the net) about our mags and nearly everything else! So drop us a line (the usual slow way; we don't have an e-mail address...yet) and let us know! Don't let us send Wire looking for you!

ITEM! Now that we've learned to spell "Edginton" and "Ollerenshaw," we can safely introduce the artists and writers for this issue!

Kyle Baker, super genius, is currently working on a project for a brand new line of Marvel Comics: a comic called BREAK THE CHAIN, which will be polybagged with a cassette by **KRS-One.** We were glad to snag **Kyle** briefly for this solo appearance of Duke Stratosphere! **John Francis Moore,** currently masterminding our DOOM and X-MEN 2099 titles, had a lot of fun working with him and revisiting cyberspace!

Michael Jan Friedman shares something in common with SPIDEY 2099 writer **Peter David.** They're *both* authors of highly-successful *Star Trek* novels. **Mike's** story on Hazzard 2099 marks his debut to these pages, but he'll be back next ish, with one or possibly *two* tales, one of which centering around yet another brand new concept! We don't give anybody a rest around here!

This may also be the first published work of **Gino DeCicco,** who's a student at the School of Visual Arts. **Gino** takes classes taught by **Walt Simonson** and **Klaus Janson.** Well, you wanted to know how to break into comics...

ITEM! You guys have been great about offering us suggestions and advice concerning the major events in 2099 history.Whether it was helping us during the crossover, or coming up with cool suggestions for spin-offs, we've practically come to rely on our readers as a resource when a major crossroads looms on the horizon.

With that in mind, consider: the magic number is 25! We've got an anniversary coming up, an we want your input in making it a particularly special one! We've been tossing around a couple of ideas amongst ourselves, ones which are guaranteed to grab you, if we get 'em just right...but we want to hear from you. What do **you** think will make for a cool celebration issue of the mags that are about to hit their twenty-fifth issue? Don't spare us in the parts and labor department. Even if you think the idea's impossible, shoot the moon! We're just as curious about what you come up with...as you are about what we'll finally do!

Or words to that effect!

ITEM! On the subject, we really wanna know how much you're enjoying the new characters and concepts we spotlight in this mag. So if you want to see a particular character again, say if Metalscream or Lachyrma or Kid Current were some of the coolest things you've ever seen, don't be shy about asking to see 'em again! Clear?

NON-ITEM! All right, look, we gotta bust outa here, but 'til we meet again three months from now, remember the new unofficial slogan as brainstormed by persistent assistant editor **Lia** "Anger is an Energy" **Pelosi**..."Yeah, Right."